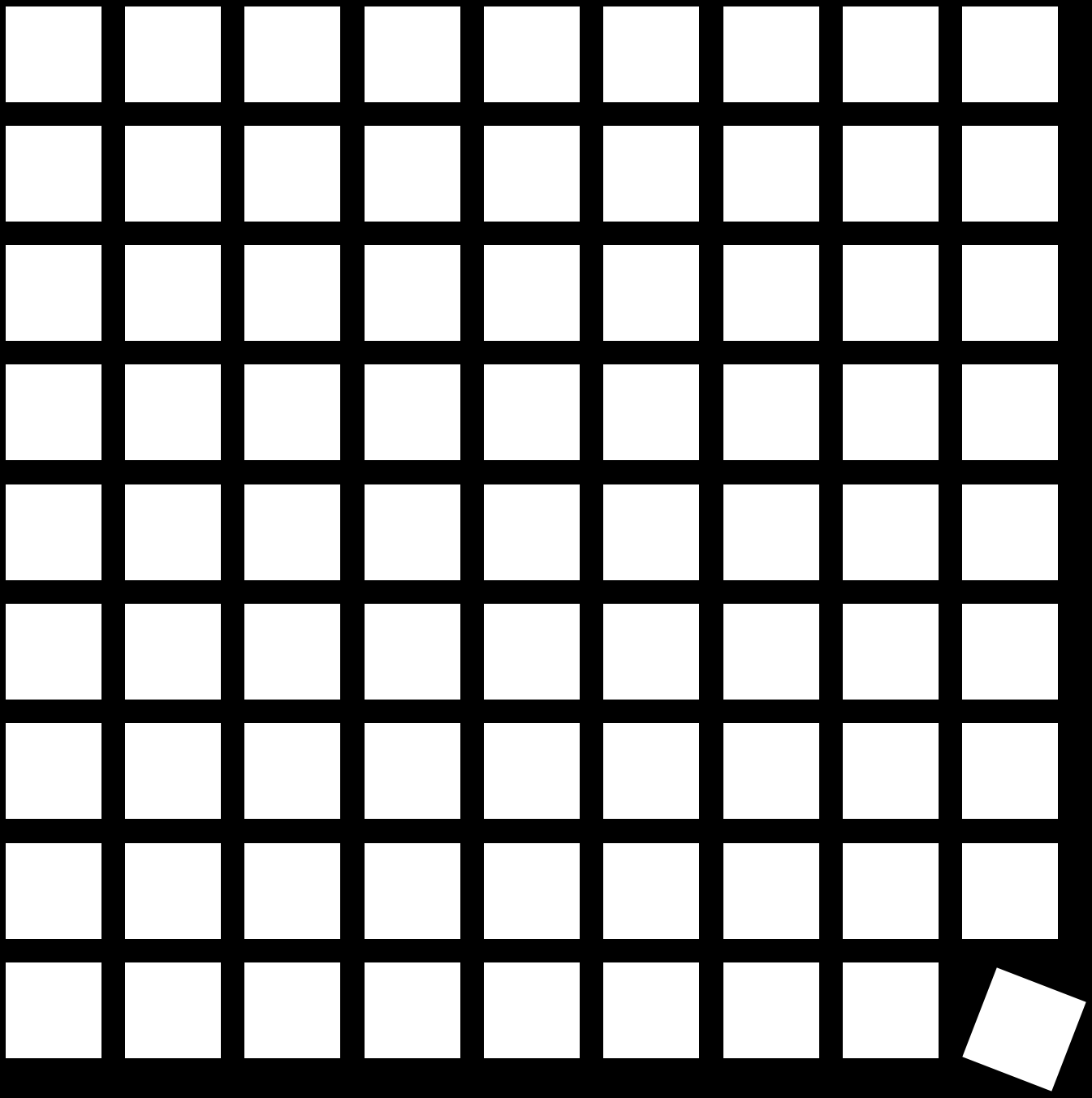
Volume IV



denCITY

denCITY
Student Journal at the University of Toronto

Volume IV

The works in this volume are contributions of undergraduate students for the 2024-25 issue of the denCITY Student Journal.

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Editor's Note

On behalf of the entire editorial team, I am pleased to present the fourth issue of the denCITY Student Journal. This issue marks a significant milestone, as it is the first publication since the journal's hiatus in 2019. We are grateful to all those who contributed to its creation—from our talented authors and dedicated editors to those who have shaped the journal in past issues. We would like to especially extend heartfelt thanks to Professor David Roberts, Professor Aditi Mehta, and Kate Johnson, whose support and guidance over the past two years have been pivotal in reviving the journal. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to my fellow editors – your faith in and commitment to the journal's success is the key to bringing it to fruition. It has truly taken a village (or perhaps a city, in our case!) to bring denCITY back into print.

This volume's theme, "Urban Contestations," examines cities as spaces where competing interests, identities, and ideologies coincide. The world that we have been living in since the journal's last issue has increasingly been marked by polarization and differences among our communities. Yet, we believe that the pursuit of inclusivity and harmony begins with the recognition and understanding of these differences. Cities, as amalgamations of lived experiences, are not only sites of conflict but also of mediation, which continuously shape the urban landscape.

To our readers, we hope that the works in the journal will encourage you to think about the various ways the city –with its diverse sense-scapes, histories and cultures – may contain contestations within its space. Urban contestation, as we understand it in this issue, is not limited to overt forms of resistance or conflicts. It is a process that includes struggles and tensions that are experienced by individuals and communities alike. It is the conversation about the allocation of resources, the use of public space, and the way the city is organized. Most significantly, it is the constant negotiations of various identities and positionalities within the city – how we each carve out a place for ourselves within the complexities of urban life.

Ultimately, this issue seeks to shine a light on the resilience and strength that are at the roots of these urban struggles. Through the stories and perspectives shared in this collection, we hope to inspire you to engage critically and meaningfully with the contested terrain of urban life.

Sincerely,

- Yi En Wang
Editor-in-Chief, denCITY 2025

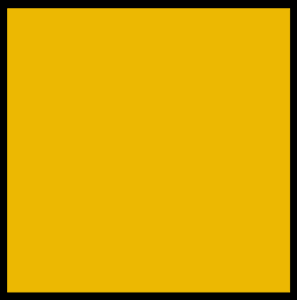
Foreword

denCITY is a student journal developed and maintained by the Urban Studies Student Union at the University of Toronto. It reflects the ethos of the Urban Studies Program which is rooted in the multidisciplinary study of the city and urban life with a keen focus on imagining and working towards more just, sustainable, and livable urban futures. The journal has been on hiatus since 2019, disrupted initially by the pandemic, but has been revived by through the dedicated work and commitment of this year's student union leadership. The journal provides an opportunity to share and celebrate the work that urban studies students are doing on a wide range of urban issues.

This year's theme is Urban Contestations. In their submissions, students were challenged to consider the multitude of ways in which contestations shape our cities, urban cultures and ways of life. These contestations range from competing visions of urban futures to negotiation and management of incongruous land uses and the uneven distribution of investment and opportunities to brewing physical and material fights over spaces, resources, and rights in our cities. In cities we see the confluence of a complex set of forces, needs, and desires that ultimately shape the physical and cultural dynamics of our urban lives.

It is our pleasure to share this volume with you. I hope that you find it engaging, inspiring, and, ultimately, challenging. Congratulations to URSSU on your hard work and dedication to re-energizing denCITY.

- David Roberts,
Associate Professor and Director of the Urban Studies Program
Academic Advisor to denCITY Student Journal



Cada Ciudad Puede Ser Otra

by Isabella Durazo

CADA CIUDAD

PUEDE SER OTRA

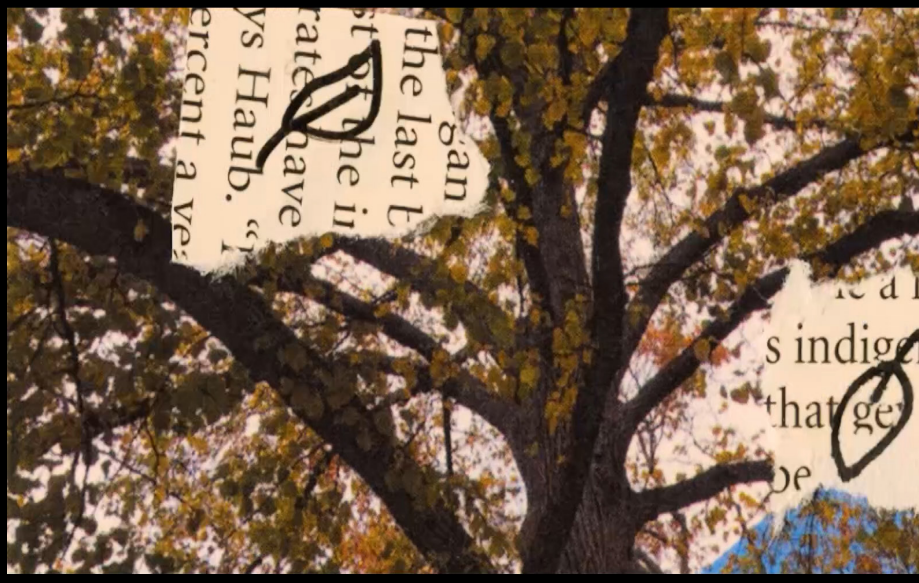
My work is a journey through creative mediums that both inspire and connect me to my self-identity as a Mexican immigrant. Central to my practice is the exploration of diverse materials and techniques representing identity, a theme brought to life in my mixed-media film, Cada Ciudad Puede Ser Otra.

Please access the full video on *denCITY Journal* through JPS (Journal Production Services, University of Toronto Libraries)

every city could be as many

as lovers walk through it

and the homily of pine trees



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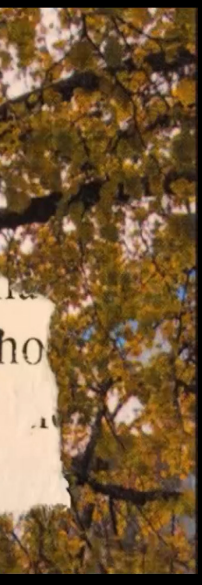
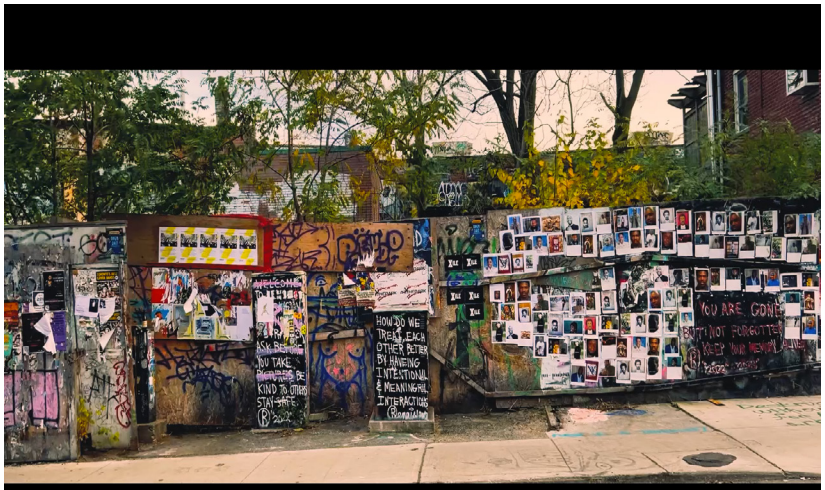


A multicultural and diverse space like a city initially posed as a challenge to maintaining my self-identity. However, leaving my place of belonging and establishing myself in a new environment instead became an opportunity to strengthen it. Arriving in a large city like Toronto and adapting to the metropolitan lifestyle after growing up in a small, culturally distinct place felt entirely foreign.



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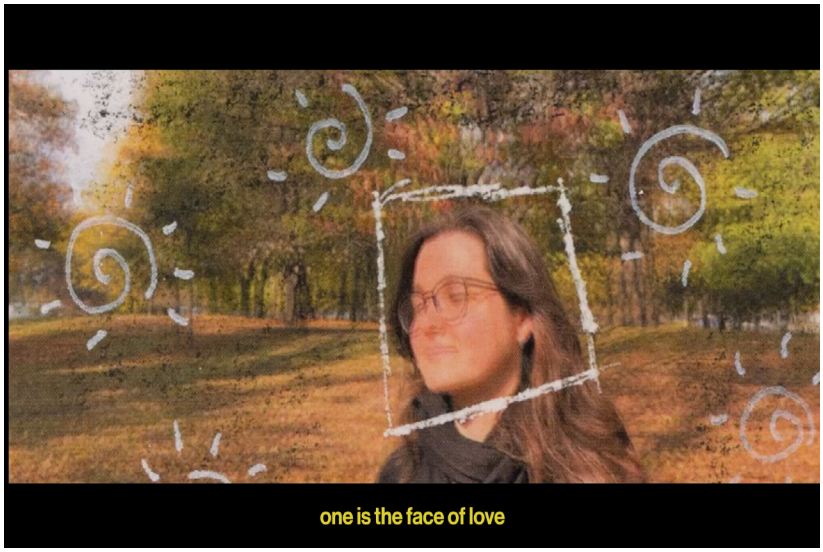
While the experience has been undoubtedly exciting, it has also felt overwhelming at times. Slowly, the process became more familiar, as I started to form meaningful relationships with people and places around the city. Creating memories through spaces, experiences, and people has deepened my journey of self-discovery, both creatively and personally.

My experience in Toronto provides a foundational concept for my film. It explores the complexivity of identity in an environment where it can be easy to feel lost.

The film incorporates a poem by Mario Benedetti, whose words deeply resonate with the theme of forming connections in unfamiliar places while leaving others behind. In the process, I also reflect on cities as spaces where multiple identities, cultures, and interests intersect. The journey of finding a sense of belonging while navigating the contrasts between cultural background and metropolitan dynamics has led me to redefine identity amidst the layered landscapes of modern cities. In this way, I aim to highlight not only personal narratives, but also connect with a broader audience who have experienced similar journeys of adaptation and self-discovery.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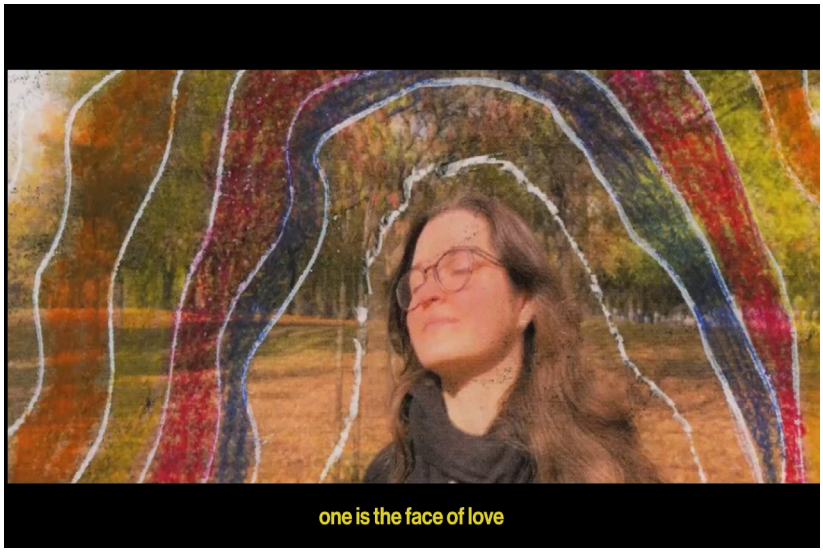
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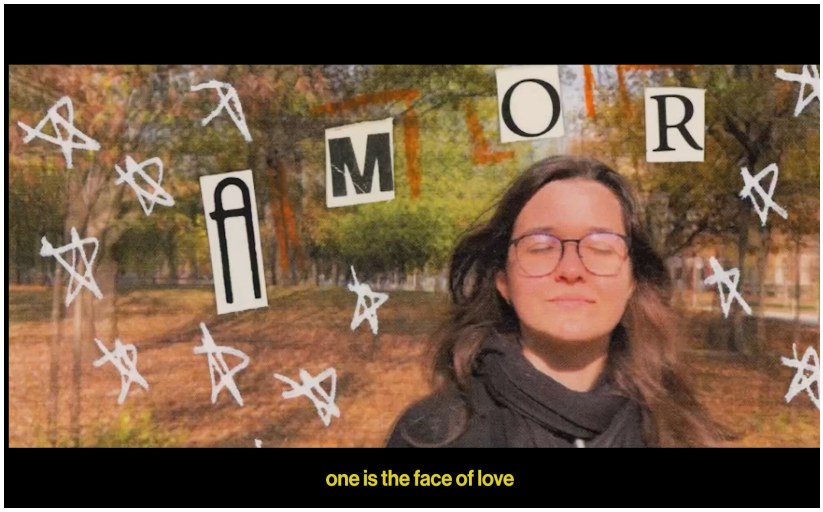
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Signs of the Past: Heritage Preservation and Urban Development in Hong Kong

by Natalie Chan

Once an integral part of Hong Kong's urban identity, neon signs have long illuminated the city's streets, embodying its unique blend of tradition and modernity. However, these glowing symbols are rapidly disappearing due to urban redevelopment, safety regulations, and the push for modernisation. As glass towers and high-rises replace old neighbourhoods, the city faces a critical contestation between progress and cultural preservation. This essay explores the tension between redevelopment and heritage through a series of photographs taken between 2019 and 2024, documenting the final moments of Hong Kong's neon-lit streets. Many of the signs captured have since been removed, leaving behind empty facades and a fading cultural memory. The images serve as both visual testimony and an inquiry into how a city can evolve while maintaining its soul. In an era of relentless transformation, Hong Kong's neon signs stand as a poignant reminder of what is at stake in pursuing urban progress.

Part 1: Cultural Significance of Street Signs

Street signs in Hong Kong are more than mere navigational tools. They are cultural artefacts that capture the city's unique history and identity. From the elegant Chinese calligraphy of older signs to bilingual labels reflecting the city's colonial past, these markers tell stories of Hong Kong's evolution (Kwok, 2019). They serve as visual anchors in a fast-changing urban environment, embodying a sense of place that connects residents to their heritage and fosters a collective memory. The typography, colour schemes, and naming conventions of street signs reveal much about Hong Kong's cultural hybridity. This mix of influences reflects the city's role as a bridge between East and West. For locals and visitors, these signs offer a window into the city's layered history, showcasing its journey from a British colony to a global metropolis while retaining its distinct Chinese identity.

Street signs, once densely packed into the city's narrow streets, have become iconic symbols of Hong Kong's bustling urban environment. Their bold presence is often nestled amidst glowing neon lights and traditional shopfronts. They formed the backdrop of the city's world-renowned street view. This imagery has been immortalised in countless films, television series, and photographs (Song, 2021). From the atmospheric settings of classic Hong Kong cinema by directors such as Wong Kar-wai to international productions seeking to capture the city's vibrant energy, street signs have played a pivotal role in defining Hong Kong's global visual identity (Tsang, 2024). Their screen appearance has made them instantly recognisable worldwide, transforming these street signs into cultural icons of Hong Kong.

Street signs also play a pivotal role in sustaining community identity. In older neighbourhoods like Mong Kok or Wan Chai, they mark spaces where daily rituals and cultural traditions unfold. Whether pointing to dai pai dong food stalls or small cha chaan teng cafes, these signs situate cultural practices in a physical context, preserving their relevance in an era of rapid modernisation. The disappearance or alteration of these signs during redevelopment projects often disrupts this connection, eroding a shared sense of belonging. Beyond their functional and historical value, street signs contribute to Hong Kong's visual character.

Signs of Hong Kong's Pawn Shops

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A turtle and a bowl of Guilinggao on this sign highlight the herbal dessert's traditional roots and health benefits.

Two feet on the sign visually communicate the foot massage service offered inside.

A figure with a Vietnamese hat riding a bicycle captures the cultural identity and culinary offerings of this pho shop.

Street signs are visual storytellers that reflect the city's vibrant local culture and values. Many traditional neon signs incorporate imagery directly tied to the businesses they represent, making them both practical and culturally meaningful. These designs often symbolise the goods or services offered, creating an immediate and intuitive connection with passersby. Moreover, these visual elements celebrate local traditions, culinary heritage, and artisanal crafts, reinforcing the cultural identity of the neighbourhoods they adorn. As redevelopment projects transform the urban landscape, preserving these unique signs becomes essential to retaining Hong Kong's distinctive character and honouring its historical roots.

A sharp and striking homage to the craft of knife-making, marking a historic knife factory.

A tea-leaf-shaped sign symbolises the heritage and craftsmanship of this tea-selling business.

The glowing hotpot bowl reflects Hong Kong's hotpot tradition.

Ceramic T-shaped Street Sign (Pre-1910)

Concrete Street Sign (1910-1930)

Cast Iron Street Signs (1930s-1960s)

T-shaped Street Signs

These photos highlight the distinctive T-shaped street signs, a symbol of Hong Kong's urban landscape before the 1960s. Attached to older buildings constructed during that period, these signs once served as practical navigational tools while simultaneously contributing to the city's unique visual identity. However, as redevelopment projects target these ageing neighbourhoods, the demolition of pre-1960s buildings often results in the disappearance of these iconic street signs. Their loss is emblematic of the broader cultural erasure that accompanies urban renewal, as modern developments replace the architectural and historical markers that once defined Hong Kong's streetscapes.

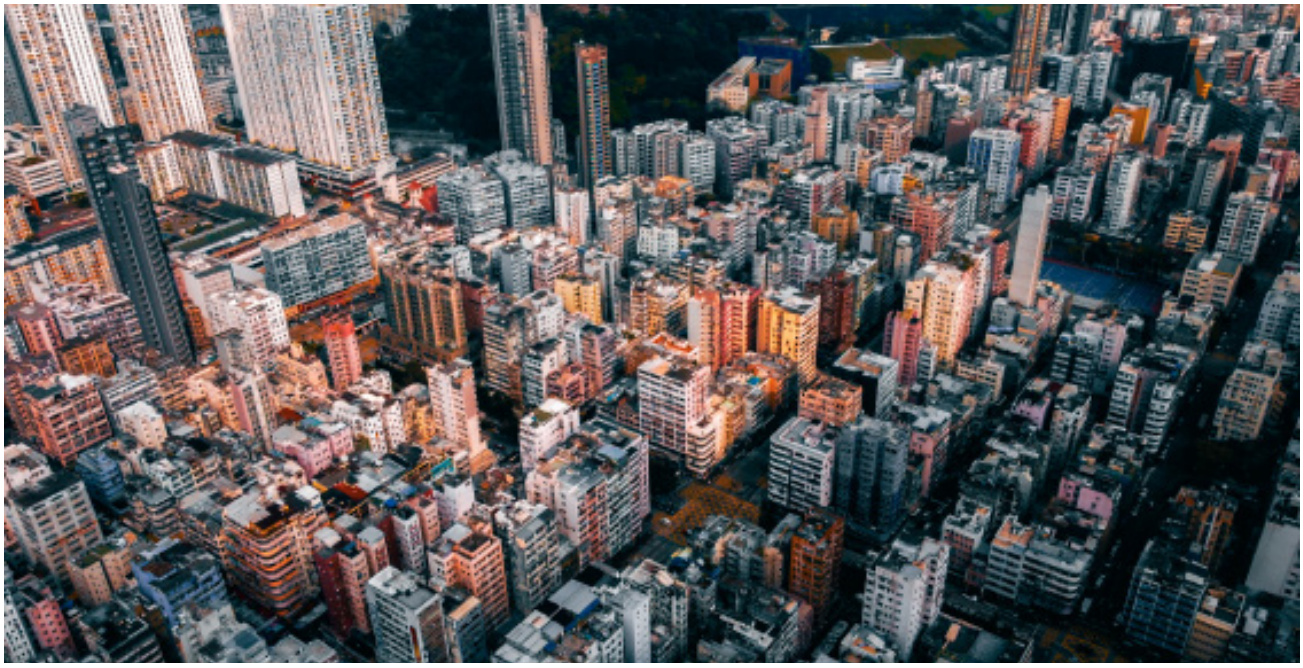
Part 2: The Regulatory Shift- from Expression to Compliance

Hong Kong's iconic neon signs, once an integral part of the city's urban identity, are now rapidly vanishing due to safety concerns and evolving regulatory frameworks. These glowing beacons, symbolic of the city's vibrant energy, have becomecasualties of a bureaucratic and safety-focused approach that prioritises public security over cultural preservation. The tension between these priorities reveal a fundamental question for cities similar to Hong Kong: how do we navigate the fine line between ensuring urban safety and maintaining cultural heritage?

The implementation of the Minor Works Control System (Building Department,2018a) and subsequent schemes, such as the Validation Scheme for Unauthorised Signboards (Building Department, 2018b), marked a shift in the governance of street signage in Hong Kong. Prompted by the 2010 Ma Tau Wai Road building collapse, these measures were introduced as part of broader efforts to enhance building safety and regulate unauthorised works (Legislative Council Commission, 2011). Under this framework, all new projecting signboards must adhere to strict guidelines, including detailed written and graphic documentation of their location, structure, and dimensions. Signboards that fail to meet the strict requirements outlined in the Building Ordinance are classified as unauthorised (Building Department, 2018b). This policy, aimed at addressing the proliferation of unauthorised signboards, established rigorous compliance requirements for their construction and maintenance, often placing iconic signs at risk of removal under redevelopment initiatives. Further compounding this regulatory tightening, voluntary self-reporting schemes introduced in 2012 and 2017 for Exempted Houses in the New Territories reflected a broader risk-based approach to managing unauthorised building works (UBWs) (Moro, 2020). By emphasising certification and licensing by qualified professionals, responsibility was transferred from occupants to building contractors, facilitating easier enforcement and sanctions. While this strategy can effectively reduce hazardous structures, it accelerated the removal of neon signs that fell outside compliance standards, deeming them unsafe or past their 'safe life.' As of today, the Buildings Department clears approximately 25,000 UBWs annually, together with many historical signs (GovHK, 2023). Despite efforts to incorporate validation processes, the net effect of these policies has been the widespread demolition of unauthorised signs and a shift in Hong Kong's urban aesthetic and cultural fabric.

As high-rises and stringent government regulations replace older buildings, neon signs are dismantled in favour of LED panels or just disappear altogether. Old-style street signs represented the intersection of commerce, craft, and culture with handcrafted artistry. Signboards for traditional businesses like herbal shops or cha chaan teng cafes featured distinct typography and designs that echoed Hong Kong's unique blend of East and West. Their removal signifies more than a technological shift. It's a visual manifestation of cultural homogenisation. Redevelopment sweeps away not only physical structures but also the stories and identities rooted in them.

Street Signs Demolished



Part 3: The Cranes Rise- Redevelopment Projects

Hong Kong's transformation into a global metropolis is backed by its rapid urban redevelopment, which is underpinned by population growth, limited flat land, modernisation needs, and the rise of gentrification. While redevelopment promises economic growth and enhanced infrastructure, it often sacrifices the city's rich cultural fabric. This contestation between redevelopment and cultural identity lies at the heart of Hong Kong's urban planning discourse.

The pressure for redevelopment in Hong Kong stems from several interconnected factors. With a population exceeding 7 million, packed into a territory of just 1,115 square kilometres, the city faces an acute shortage of flat land (GovHK, 2024). Only 24% of Hong Kong's territory is classified as built-up areas, while the remaining land is forested—this scarcity of flat land forces urban expansion to take a vertical form (Tang, 2017). As a result, Hong Kong has the highest number of skyscrapers in the world (Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, 2024). Inevitably, these towering structures are replacing older, low density buildings, particularly in areas where construction occurred during the mid-20th century. This vertical expansion is driven by the urgent need to house the growing population. Therefore, redevelopment projects often target older neighbourhoods and demolish ageing structures to make way for high-rise towers that meet contemporary safety and environmental standards.

The redevelopment of Hong Kong is a highly contested process which reflects the city's transformation into a global financial hub. After its handover to China in 1997, Hong Kong embraced the motto "Asia's World City," showing its ambition of becoming a cosmopolitan city (Brand Hong Kong, 2021). This aspiration drove extensive urban renewal projects aimed at modernising the city's infrastructure to meet the demands of an international financial centre. Redevelopment have mainly focused on replacing aging post-war buildings with mixed-use development, turning them into towering residential podiums and upscale retail spaces. These projects are

spearheaded by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), established in 2001 and endowed with legal powers to expropriate land and streamline the redevelopment process (Urban Renewal Authority, 2024a).

Under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO), the URA implements projects through two main approaches: development schemes or development projects. A development scheme is employed when a project area necessitates amendments to the land use zoning in the Outline Zoning Plan (OZP), whereas a development project is used when such amendments are not required. Each year, the URA must prepare a draft corporate plan, outlining the proposed program of projects for the next five years, together with a draft business plan specifying the projects to be undertaken in the next financial year (Urban Renewal Authority, 2024b).

Despite its strategic framework, the URA's projects have sparked significant criticism, particularly for the demolition of culturally rich areas like Lee Tung Street—popularly known as "Wedding Card Street"—and Graham Street Market (Huang, 2009; Marinelli, 2021). Trendy cafes, boutique stores, and luxury apartments now dominate areas previously known for grassroots culture. Government initiatives, like the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), aim to "improve the living environment" but often prioritise maximising land value. This kind of practice incentivises the redevelopment of older neighbourhoods, causing the displacement of long-term residents and eroding local character. While the URA argued that these neighbourhoods lacked historical value, opponents highlighted their vibrant immaterial heritage, embodied in community ties and cultural practices (Lee, 2016). The replacement of these vibrant neighbourhoods with sanitised, historicist developments stripped of their former complexity has drawn widespread backlash, intensifying debates about the balance between modernisation and cultural preservation.

The dismantling of Yue Man Square in 2020, as part of the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project. Redevelopment projects not only erase the physical structure but also the neighbourhood's cultural markers and unique characteristics to make way for modern structures.

This set of photos features the iconic King Wah Signboard shop, once located in the State Theatre shopping arcade, a Grade I historic building, before the neighbourhood underwent a compulsory acquisition as part of redevelopment projects. The shop is run by renowned Hong Kong calligrapher and font designer Au Yeung Cheong who crafted signage in the distinct Northern Wei-style script and pioneering luminous stone-textured materials. King Wah Signboard stood as a holdout business until the restoration project forced it to relocate to the remote village in Yuen Long due to unaffordable city-centre rents. The shop's displacement highlights the broader impact of redevelopment, as iconic businesses and neighbourhood identities are lost, erasing key cultural and historical aspects of Hong Kong.

State Theatre Building in North Point, a Grade I historic building.

King Wah Signboard shop and calligrapher Au Yeung Cheong.

Part 4: Key Contestation- Urban Development VS. Cultural Preservation

Street signs in Hong Kong are more than advertisements. They embody the city's collective memory and visual identity. Their removal for safety, modernisation, or redevelopment threatens cultural continuity and erases vital connections to the city's history, vibrant neighbourhoods, and local businesses (Kwok, 2020; Tsang, 2024). This loss reflects a broader shift in Hong Kong's character—from one deeply rooted in history to one increasingly influenced by gentrification and globalmodernisation.

The forces of gentrification have amplified the tension between urban redevelopment and cultural preservation (Tsang, 2024). As old neighbourhoods redevelop into modernised high-rise buildings catering to wealthier residents, the local, working-class identity of these areas is replaced by upscale restaurants, luxury apartments, and designer stores. Street signs, once an integral part of the streetscape, are often seen as remnants of a "dated" past. In their place, new developments aim to redefine the city through modern designs that cater to a global audience. Therefore, the unique characteristics that once defined certain districts are erased. This process not only affects the physical space but also has sociocultural impacts. As neighbourhoods undergo gentrification, long-time residents are displaced, and the cultural practices that once flourished in these areas are often lost or altered. The neon signs that once brought local flavour to the streets are replaced by generic corporate logos and billboards, further homogenising the appearance of the city.

The current policies reflect a pragmatic approach to urban management but lack

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provisions to safeguard cultural heritage. Advocates for preservation suggest integrating neon signs into public art projects, creating designated cultural zones where such artefacts are protected, or establishing maintenance funds for their repair and compliance (Kwok, 2019). While many of these suggestions were ignored by authorities prioritizing safety and redevelopment, institutions like M+, an art museum located in the West Kowloon Cultural District of Hong Kong, have stepped in to preserve neon signs, recognising their cultural and artistic significance. Since 2013, M+ has acquired several neon signs, along with an archive of design drawings and photo documentation, ensuring these iconic symbols of Hong Kong's visual identity are not entirely lost (Chow, 2020). The decline of neon signs in Hong Kong reflects a broader global narrative of cities grappling with the competing imperatives of safety and heritage. While ensuring public security is critical, the question remains: can urban policy evolve to balance these priorities, or will cultural landmarks continue to fade under the weight of regulation?

Part 5: Conclusion- The Role of Urban Design

Urban redevelopment in Hong Kong often prioritises efficiency over inclusivity. The high-rise towers that dominate the skyline cater to economic imperatives, but they alienate the cultural and social practices tied to older, human-scale environments. To mitigate the cultural costs of redevelopment, designing with cultural identity in mind is crucial. Incorporating heritage elements into new buildings or creating public spaces that honour historical narratives can help balance modernisation with cultural preservation. For instance, the West Kowloon Cultural District, though criticised for its commercial ambitions, represents an attempt to integrate art and history into uban design by holding an exhibition of demolished signs (Moro, 2017).

As Hong Kong's skyline continues to rise, the city faces an urgent need to reconcile redevelopment with cultural identity. The tension between these priorities is not inevitable but stems from an overemphasis on economic growth at the expense of cultural sustainability. Policy frameworks must evolve to address this imbalance by valuing cultural heritage as an integral part of urban development. Efforts to preserve neon signs, street names, and historic neighbourhoods demonstrate that redevelopment doesn't have to mean erasure. Community participation, heritage conservation laws, and innovative urban planning can create a cityscape that respects the past while accommodating the future. Ultimately, the future of Hong Kong depends on finding sustainable and respectful ways to navigate the tension between urban development and cultural preservation. By recognising the significance of cultural markers such as neon signs, Hong Kong can embrace both its past and its future.

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The Last Will and Testament of Line

by Sahana Gunaratnam

I, Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT), being of sound mind and body, hereby declare this to be my last will and testament. I revoke all previous wills.

My name is SRT. I was born in March of 1985. I came to existence to serve the growing population of my city, my people, my family, Scarborough. It was my pride and joy for the last 38 years. As I served the Former City of Scarborough, I realized early on that I was more than just an LRT but a means to access the City of Toronto. I was a lifeline for Scarberians looking to get to work, school, and even a Jays game. I was everything to Scarberians, even though I wasn't supposed to be.

Scarborough transit didn't begin with me. In 1977, the Toronto Metro Council initially planned to utilize a streetcar route; however, the provincial government forced council to change its plan to welcome me, the SRT, instead.

I served generations of Scarborough residents. I helped get students to classes, adults to work, and families looking to take a trip into the city. I even brought couples together on their first dates to the movies at Scarborough Town Centre (STC).

I did it all.

I even helped the artistic Torontonian looking to capture "aesthetic" pictures of Scarborough. I was there for the joyous moments and even the miserable ones. I provided shelter to those looking to stay out of the cold, helped residents access dwindling healthcare, and tried to be there for those working the late night shift for little pay as they rushed to return to their families.

I have been through it all.

It shouldn't have been this way. I say this not out of guilt but out of transit pride. You deserved more. You see, I was supposed to have another child, which would have my hands full as I reached Malvern. But having children is too costly, as deemed by my parents, the TTC.

This didn't stop me. I continued to ensure everyone, from the East to the West of the city, could hear the roaring sound of my wheels as I came down the rail track. Yet, I shouldn't have been the only access for Scarborough to utilize their right to the city. I shouldn't have been the only one providing service for all of Scarborough. When people think of Scarborough transit, I shouldn't have been the first thing people thought of. I should have been part of a broader transit family, but instead, it was just me.

In reality, when you think of transit in Scarborough, the first thing that likely comes to mind is me and the TTC buses—a rather low bar.

Unfortunately, the bar only continued to get lower.

I was 21 years old, and I felt like retiring. I just couldn't keep going. I could no longer continue serving the people of Scarborough—whether it was seniors struggling to reach their doctor's appointments due to out-of-service elevators or children overwhelmed by the ever-growing crowds that swelled with each transit delay.

They deserve better. I heard news that my retirement papers were going to be accepted amidst a new "Transit City" plan. I was over the moon. I would soon be able to put my wheels up, all while Scarborough continued to be connected with the rest of the city with a new LRT infrastructure, which included 50 stops. I was sad to retire, but I knew Scarborough would be in good hands.

My bittersweet acceptance was short-lived.

The "Transit City" plans were cancelled in 2010. My retirement papers were snatched away in an instant. I had to continue serving Scarborough even though I no longer should. In my years of service, I wasn't sure if I would ever retire as every year passed on. My only hope was that I didn't continue operating until my dying breath.

As the years passed, I was no longer an LRT but a football—tossed back and forth between City Hall and Queen's Park, while Scarborough remained on the sidelines, watching the game unfold, unsure who to root for with each play.

Another opportunity to retire appeared through a proposal for a 3-stop subway. However, the debate over the number of stops persisted, with one mayor—who shall remain unnamed—proposing the construction of just a single subway stop.

A singular subway stop. Who would this serve? I may be an LRT, but even I serve more residents. Would this singular subway stop even serve residents? Heck, it wouldn't even serve the pigeons!

I couldn't voice my concern, but others were voicing it for me. I had to think of my ultimate goal, Scarborough, who desperately needed better transit yet whose goalposts were constantly moved farther and farther away. I wondered what the delay was for this one subway stop because, at this point, anything was better than nothing. Can't people see that I am getting too old? When I heard the price of the one subway stop was $3.9 billion, I felt myself shaking even more than usual.

Eventually, the Province of Ontario swooped in again and took over the Scarborough subway extension plan, adding two additional stops. But it came with a kick-- it was to open in 2030. My heart sank. Clearly I wasn't retiring anytime soon. I knew these policies and politicians would work me 'til my screws were beginning to become undone because a garbage can like me was equipped to serve Scarborough, but they wouldn't pull the same trick on Rosedale residents, would they?

It is for this reason I created this will if something happened. If you are reading this, that means something did.

I know everyone had something to say about me, even I did too. I was more than just public transit. I managed to be everything and yet nothing simultaneously. I was constantly told I wasn't cost-effective and questioned whether I would continue to work. I worked for 38 years, didn't I? So clearly, I worked. It wasn't without hiccups, and I would be lying if I didn't acknowledge it. I wasn't perfect, but no one is. I didn't always appear when someone needed to get home after a long shuttle bus ride from Line 2. I wasn't reliable after years of grinding and working. I know I wasn't the best option for Scarborough, not always, but at least I tried my best.

Instead of an RT, the people and politicians wanted a subway. It wasn't up to me, but everyone took it upon themselves to blame me. I could hear every complaint in the carts from every rider. Hear the snide comments from the operators, questioning whether I was coming into work or not.

Seeing the sad expressions from riders, they looked like I was coming down with some sort of terminal disease. All I ask is that when I'm gone, remember me at my best, not in my last moments. But the roaring sound you would hear as I turned the bend and pulled into Kennedy Station, how quickly I got you inside so you didn't have to suffer the smells at Midland Station. The calmness I brought when we arrived at the silent McCowan Station.

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE
McCOWAN
KENNEDY
LAWRENCE EAST
ELLESMERE
MIDLAND
SCARBOROUGH CENTRE
McCOWAN
3011
3
3011

I leave these parting words and estates:

For my children, McCowan, Scarborough Centre, Midland, Ellesmere, Lawrence East and Kennedy, I will miss our interactions, even though it was for a couple of seconds each day, which is something I will cherish for eternity.

To the vultures, I will leave that to you to decide who you are. I leave you with parting words to not use me in my absence as a tool. I am more than a political football to be used against Scarborough at any time, not even during election season. In my absence, I hope you achieve policies that aim to bring Scarborough on the same playing field as the rest of Toronto.

To Scarborough, I leave you the remaining rail tracks. I hope you transform them into something everyone can cherish, remembering me with every step. Build a better Scarborough than before—and don't let the vultures take this from you too. Scarborough transit may have begun with me, but I hope it doesn't end with just me.

All My Love,
SRT

How Toronto Became Divided By Taylor Swift

by Kaitlyn Chan

The City of Toronto warmly welcomed Taylor Swift, hosting six nights of her iconic Eras Tour at the Rogers Centre from November 14-23, 2024. As Swift captivated thousands of fans and filled the air with the sounds of exhilaration, her concerts also intensely exaggerated the polarized existing spatial injustices within the city. This paper critically examines how the City's response to her brief residency exacerbated social divisions through interviews and journalistic and statistical reports. In doing so, I argue that while City authorities eagerly created blank space for her attendees, they simultaneously aggravated issues of displacement for people without housing, whilst perpetuating socio-economic divides in the city.

Methodology and Limitations

This article features insights from four individuals: two undisclosed hospitality industry employees and two residents of the Spadina-Harbourfront area. To broaden the scope, the article also includes opinions and sentiments from TTC riders shared online in response to the TTC's Instagram post about Taylor Swift's concert promotion and news articles featuring interviews with an unhoused individual who was relocated. While the paper discusses the deep-rooted social marginalization exacerbated by Swift's concert, the analysis is limited by the small number of interviewed individuals due to capacity and resource constraints.

The Story of Us: Context

On December 8th, Taylor Swift officially concluded her highly successful Eras Tour in Vancouver, BC. Over the course of her two-year global tour, Swift's performances have generated significant economic benefits for the host cities. According to data from the research firm, QuestionPro, the Eras Tour is estimated to have driven over $4 billion in consumer spending in the U.S. alone, surpassing Elton John to become the highest-grossing tour by any artist in history (McIntyre, 2024). Swift's ticket and merchandise sales earnings have contributed to her rise to billionaire status. Her tour has also profoundly impacted local businesses, including ticket resellers, hospitality, transportation, and retail sectors. This widespread economic effect has led journalists and academics to coin the term "Swiftonomics" to describe the phenomenon.

The attendance at Taylor Swift's Eras Tour has become a social commodity in its own right, fueled by her immense fame, critical acclaim, record-breaking achievements, and the star-studded celebrity presence at her concerts. Swift's global fanbase, affectionately known as the "Swifties", has dubbed the notoriously difficult process of securing tickets through online platforms as "The Great War"—a reference to her song of the same name. Fans have shared countless personal stories of "surviving The Great War" and finally securing tickets (Xiao, 2023). However, the battle persists for many Swifties, as eager fans and curious onlookers continue to purchase tickets at prices far beyond their face value. In Toronto, for example, the Toronto Star reported that the most expensive tickets for the city's final three shows reached a staggering $22,500 CAD for seats closest to Swift's stage (Austin, 2024).

After a request from the Canadian Prime Minister on the social media platform X, Taylor Swift added new tour dates and ultimately decided to conclude her record-breaking Eras Tour in Canada. In response to Swift's residency, Toronto quickly followed the lead of other cities and ramped up preparations for the megastar's arrival. The City implemented novel (to Toronto, at the least) urban interventions, with municipal accommodations designed specifically to cater to Swift's presence

and for the concert attendees. These included celebratory events, special transit and bike ride accommodations. Various Limited Activity Zones, public closures and other physical and policy obstructions and barricades were also widely publicized on the municipal website as the City ramped up efforts to accommodate the influx of fans and media. This marked an extraordinary level of preparation for the short-term residency of a single artist, unparalleled to the city's history of artists' residencies. However, beneath the glamour and the government's promotion of projected economic benefits, the event also highlighted and exacerbated existing urban inequalities. The focus on facilitating Swift's concert experience for attendees simultaneously reflects underlying issues such as class division, the city's marginalization of its unhoused population, and systemic inequalities.

No Body, No Crime: The Displaced Unhoused Residents, Nearby

According to Homeless Hub (2024), 7,347 individuals were recorded as experiencing homelessness in Toronto in 2021. This number was projected to rise significantly, driven by several factors, including Canada's economic downturn and ongoing issues related to drug addiction. Homelessness became increasingly visible, with individuals seen in the city's busiest corners, while many other cases remained invisible, hidden amongst Toronto's urban realities. Like other global cities preparing for Swift's arrival (Cirrone, 2024), during her short stay in Toronto, reports highlighted the municipal government's efforts to clear unhoused encampments near the Rogers Centre downtown and other surrounding popular tourist hotspots in the lead-up to, and throughout, Swift's two-week residency. According to various reports, the city's spokesperson stated that only two people were affected by this implementation, with one of them sharing their experience with the media (Colley, 2024). These individuals were relocated to a hotel on the outskirts of the city, with police assuring them that they could "stay as long as they require the services." While this may seem promising, the situation highlights significant gaps in Toronto's welfare provisions. If hotel rooms have always been vacant and available for unhoused individuals, why did the city only choose to effectively utilize these resources in response to the arrival of an international pop icon?

Furthermore, the question remains: can these affected individuals truly stay in secure shelter beyond Swift's departure once the concert crowds leave the city? Or will they be abandoned once again, thrown back onto the streets during Toronto's coldest months, with no notice and insufficient time to gather resources to survive the harsh winter? This raises deeper concerns about the city's priorities and the treatment of its most vulnerable populations.

Displacement has been justified by city officials as merely a strategy to strengthen the City's illusion of being "safe," "clean," and "welcoming" for the influx of visitors. However, displaced individuals should not be seen as mere pawns in the city's effort to create a façade for tourism. Taylor Swift's arrival to Toronto has starkly highlighted the city's ongoing failure to adequately address the needs of those challenged by secure housing. In this case, the city has utilized displacement as a tool for city branding, prioritizing its image over the welfare of its most vulnerable residents.

At the time of writing, homelessness is once again visible near the Rogers Centre. As one strolls along Queens Quay West, just south of the venue where Taylor Swift performed for six nights, the sight of men huddling in cor-

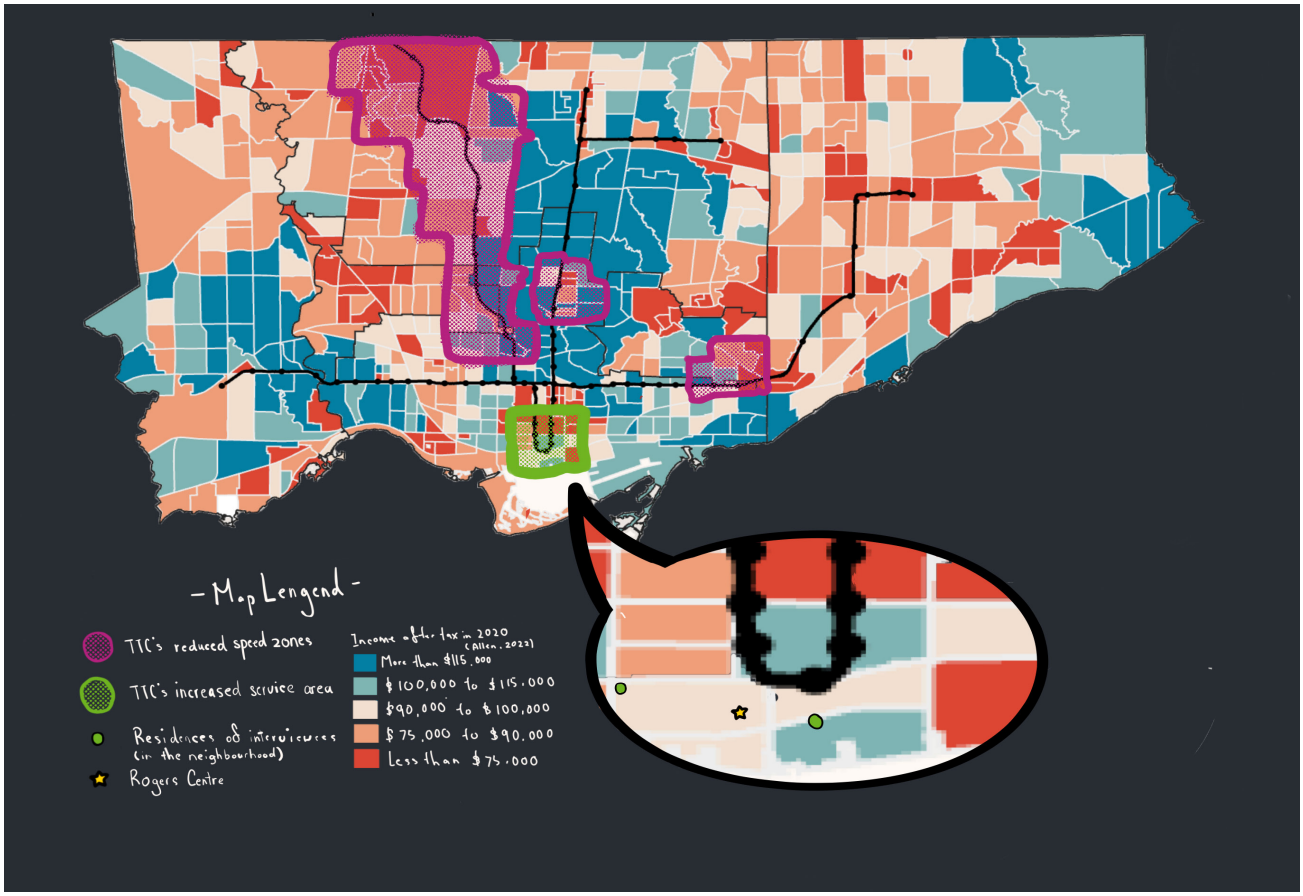

Figure A: This map, originally created by Jeff Allen (2022) at the School of Cities, visualizes income disparities across Toronto neighborhoods using average household income data from Statistics Canada. I have edited the map to highlight areas impacted by the TTC's Reduced Speed Zones and those receiving increased service during Swift's performance. The map reveals a clear correlation between socioeconomic status and the TTC's service adjustments, while also pinpointing interviewees' residences near the venue.

ners under the shadow of the CN Tower starkly contrasts with the city's so-called efforts to assist those without shelter during the pop star's residency. The municipal promises and the post-concert harsh realities on the streets are impossible to ignore. If Toronto genuinely wishes to portray itself as a city free of homelessness, Swift's brief stay should serve as a motivation for city officials. Let this be a lesson in how not to approach homelessness and a reminder that true interventions lie in defending the rights of unhoused individuals, providing them with real opportunities to access safe and stable housing in the long term, and providing practical assistance in achieving liveability in the city—not simply erased from the city's narrative beneficial for tourism or city branding, or continue their marginalization from before Swift's arrival.

How Toronto Exiled Its Population With Lesser Economic Capability

In 2011, David Hulchanski introduced the **Three Cities Theory**, which categorized districts in Toronto into three distinct areas based on income levels: **City 1**, representing the wealthier class; **City 2**, the middle class; and **City 3**, the lower-income class. Hulchanski observed that, in recent years, **City 1** has largely aligned with the city's expanding subway network, while **City 3**—home to low-

er-income populations—has been pushed to the outskirts of the city, often with minimal or insufficient public transportation access. This segregation, he argued, created significant mobility challenges for those living in lower-income areas, limiting their access to opportunities, services, and employment. Hulchanski's 2005 predictions were later confirmed in a 2022 report on income inequality and poverty concentration in Toronto (Allen, 2022), which reflected Hulchanski's findings on current mobility challenges in lower-income neighbourhoods. The updated report highlighted the continuous division of wealth in the Toronto landscape, with clear disparities in access to transportation and resources. Toronto Vital Sign Report in 2023 reflected on the TTC's (Toronto Transit Commission) reduction on services which poses the most impact to lower income areas as demonstrated by increased wait time, delays, security incidents, and cancellation of services (Toronto Foundation, 2023).

While the TTC has made efforts to address some of the divisions in the city, these issues continue to persist, particularly for residents in Hulchanski's **City 3**, where lower-income populations face daily challenges in commuting. In preparation for *The Eras Tour,* the TTC significantly increased service for concertgoers, allocating financial resources to decorate stations with Swift-themed displays and promoting *Swiftie* content on social media. This move clearly reflected the TTC's priorities. Rather than strengthening existing infrastructure and providing clear improvements for the city's residents, the TTC appeared to capitalize on the influx of concert attendees, focusing resources on the two weekends of Swift's shows while neglecting the needs of everyday commuters.

For the duration of *The Eras Tour,* the TTC prioritized Swift's attendees, enhancing services and created a more convenient experience for concert-goers. Meanwhile, daily commuters—especially those already marginalized by income inequality (as illustrated in figure A) —continued to struggle with inadequate services just to get on with their everyday life. As the TTC focused on Swiftie hotspots, essential services outside of this "Swift bubble" experienced continuous outages. BlogTO, a local news outlet, even dubbed this series of mishaps "November's Taylor Swift Madness" (Landau, 2024). During this madness, one Instagram user also responded to the Taylor Swift advertisement posted by the official TTC account, expressing, "How about making daily commutes swift as well, you effin moronic TTC" (andremrodrig, 2024).

In districts that are part of **City 3**, such as Wilson, Sheppard West, Yorkdale, and Lawrence West, reduced speed zones were implemented in major transit hubs, causing significant delays and making services unavailable to regular TTC riders (as highlighted in figure A) (TTC, 2024). This disruption was exacerbated by the timing of maintenance upgrades, which the commission wrongfully chose to carry out during this chaotic period created by the influx of Swift's attendees. Interviewees living in City 3 neighbourhoods shared the inconvenience of getting to their shifts near the stadium during Swift's residency. One respondent said, "I tried to take the TTC but was stuck in the subway! I couldn't call work to let them know I'd be late, and when I tried taking an Uber, I got stuck in traffic with the Swifties." Another interviewee added, 'Near the stadium, ramps (entrances) to the 401 are bottlenecks; it tests someone's luck to get out of the neighbourhood during big events.' Alongside technical outages, these factors disproportionately impacted residents in lower-income areas who rely on the TTC for daily commuting. Not only did the TTC fail to provide adequate alternatives or critical announcements for residents in **City 3**, but their decisions also compounded the difficulties faced by marginal-

ized communities. The failure to balance the needs of everyday riders with the focus on event-goers further deepened the inequities in Toronto's transit system, with one rider asking on Instagram, 'Am I the only person who feels like a clown? Because services (are) increased for a show, but it doesn't for everyday essential activities' (agataerhart, 2024). This situation highlights a troubling trend where the TTC's priorities, shaped by tourism and special events, come at the expense of the city's most vulnerable populations.

Don't Blame Me, But…

The massive economic boost from the mega pop star's six-night performance also deepened the socioeconomic divides in the city. The neighbourhood where the Rogers Centre is located—Spadina-Harbourfront—sits in Hulchanski's **City 1**, an area long known for its expensive real estate, and is home to many of the city's affluent professionals and retirees. Swift's economic impact has uniformly sparked positive reactions from nearby residents. One male interviewee, around 40 years old, who had recently moved to the city and bought a home, considered renting out his apartment to concertgoers, saying, "If only I'm comfortable with strangers staying at my place, I'd rent it out to people going to the concert." In contrast, another male respondent in his mid-70s, a retired executive, shared his positive opinion: 'I think it's great to see the city so lively again, with such a great crowd and sparkling outfits. They really boost the city's economy.' While Swift's concert significantly disrupted Torontonians living on the city's outskirts—causing extended transportation delays and limited access—the city's elite residents near the venue remained largely unaware of the impact on other residents. This highlights the city's failure to address the socio-economic polarization exacerbated by Swift's presence. While there is no inherent fault in nearby residents capitalizing on the economic benefits of the concert, their support reflects the city's prioritization of urban interventions driven by an international star and her economically capable attendees. This discrepancy in support is ironic, as it is limited to those near the venue and the municipal government. Affluent city residents remain oblivious to the consequences of concentrated municipal resources, while residents in City 3 continue to face restricted mobility, stranded with few options to reach places as essential as their workplaces.

Conclusion

While neighbouring city Vancouver reported an economic impact of $157 million (The Canadian Press, 2024), Toronto's much-hyped economic benefits from Taylor Swift's *The Eras Tour* have been far less evident. The municipal interventions designed to accommodate concertgoers have instead highlighted and, in some cases, exacerbated existing social injustices. The displacement of unhoused individuals and the marginalization of economically disadvantaged groups—through forced relocations and inadequate responses from municipal officials and the TTC—underscore several critical issues:

1. **The significance of these issues:** The disruptions faced by vulnerable populations such as unhoused and lower-income residents, on the other hand, well-to-do individuals capitalizing on the event, speaks to the deep-rooted social inequities within Toronto.

2. **The city's current capacity to address these issues:** The efficient services provided to concertgoers, contrasted with the inadequate responses for local residents,

highlight a large gap in the delivery of public resources. This disparity not only exposes the city's failure to effectively address social issues but also demonstrates its untapped potential to apply the same level of efficiency in solving social challenges.

3. **The city's reputation:** A city's reputation should not merely be crafted through public narratives or grand events; it should be shaped by its real strategies, addressing social issues and ensuring the well-being of all its residents, not just those who can afford to participate in the city's most glamorous event.

Despite claims of "madness" and exaggerated accounts of local injustices related to city interventions around the concert, the anticipated city-shaking economic impact, as projected by municipal officials, has not materialized. Instead, Swift's arrival has become a symbol of Torontonians' experiences during the "November Taylor Swift Madness" and a manifestation of urban contestations. While the state and city elites eagerly sought to capitalize on Swift's presence and the influx of concertgoers, the reality for many city dwellers was one of navigating chaos, largely due to the inefficiencies of government interventions. Amid the glossy, publicized images of Swift's stay in Toronto, the personal stories of residents—those who remained largely unseen in the background of these advertisements—serve as a reflection of another side of urban life: one marked by resilience in the face of state-driven disruption.

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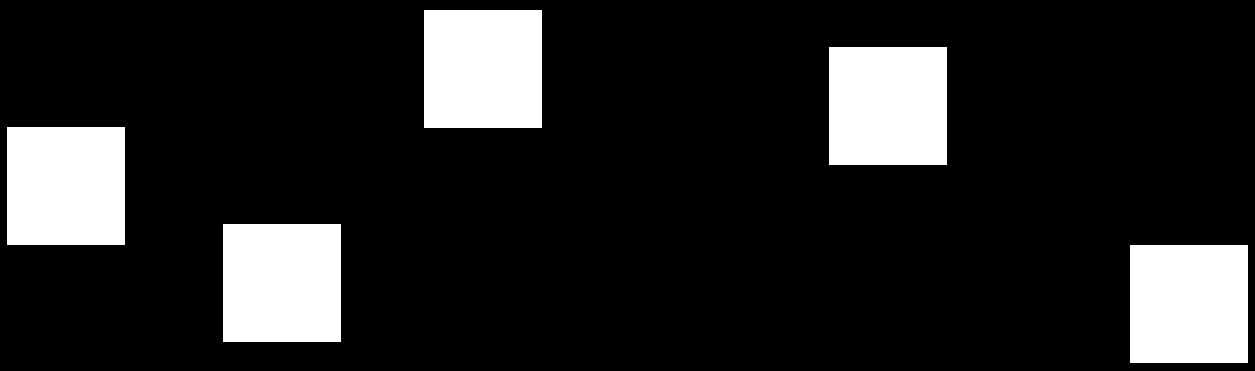
two lovers in an earth castle by the moon's riverbed

by Sabrina McLennon



in a winding staircase of mermaid hair
flower foragers crouch at blue views
boarded up by construction panels,
sealed by windows of sea-green
to emerge from an abyss of lost souls
my thoughts construct a castle in a shoebox
the sting of cupid's arrow cements my talent for daydreaming
erecting my spine to stand tall in the amethyst lather of rainclouds
the storm has passed?
we are not what we might be; what we are
chuckles at the ambush of snaking fangs
beyond the interval of now and here:
stardust glitters in rivers of aquamarine
water runs by rule; the flower moon
has scrupulously beamed and glowed
a goddess lives in the exacting crescent
casting white doves to carry her will
and that is that, is that, is that.
s.m

Two Lovers in an Earth Castle by the Moon's Riverbed captures the vivid and heightened reality of a manic episode, exploring the interplay between imagination and reality through a dreamscape of aspiration, transformation, and divine guidance. Through cosmic imagery, the poem reflects on love, fate, and the liminality of existence, wherein time and identity shift like water under moonlight. The piece invites readers into a world where the boundaries between myth and memory dissolve.

Graffiti in Bogota: the Murder of Diego Felipe Becerra and Subsequent

by Gayathri Siva

On the night of August 19, 2011, Diego Felipe Becerra, a 16-year-old graffiti artist in Bogotá, Columbia, was painting pictures of Felix the Cat on an underpass, when police unexpectedly arrived and fatally shot Becerra as he tried to flee the scene. In the initial aftermath of the murder, police did make any attempt to help Becerra nor did they transport him to a hospital. Rather, they lied and said that he was a robber as opposed to what he truly was, a graffiti artist. Due to widespread outrage and protest from graffiti artists in Bogotá, the city subsequently decriminalized graffiti. In this paper, I examine the murder of teen graffiti artist, Diego Felipe Becerra and the relevant legislative actions that contributed to the decriminalization and regulation of graffiti in Bogotá. I argue that the Becerra murder sparked a city-wide movement, resulting in the subsequent decriminalization and promotion of free speech through legislative action. In Bogotá, graffiti is a political act.

Diego Felipe Becerra's Murder

16-year-old Becerra was painting images of his iconic Felix the Cat on the walls of an underpass the night of August 19, 2011. When police arrived, Becerra tried to run away, only to be shot and killed at the scene. Officers not only did nothing to help Becerra, but they also planted a gun at the scene to make it seem as though the artist was armed. This murder sparked widespread outrage, with many of Bogota's residents returning to paint the remainder of the underpass in protest.

The outrage at Becerra's murder was intertwined with anger towards the corruption of law enforcement. The city's police earned this reputation through the acceptance of bribes and hypocritical behavior (Finn, 2016). Notably, they were seen escorting Canadian popstar Justin Bieber in tagging an unauthorized graffiti zone. (Tagging is the signing of one's graffiti name in "a quick, illegible squig- who did not hesitate to murder 16-year-old Becerra for a similar act. The stark contrast between the protection of a foreign white pop artist and the murder of a Colombian boy for the same crime catalyzed social upheaval from hundreds of artists. According to The Guardian, Bieber's work was "plastered over by hundreds of artists" in retaliation by the next day (Finn, 2016). These events initiated major policy and legislative changes resulting in decriminalization and regulation of graffiti in Bogotá (Wakeland, 2021).

Views on Graffiti in Bogotá

Graffiti art in Bogotá is "almost always political," drawing attention to women's rights and women's care work (Finn, 2016)*(Figure 1)*; the very same care work that continues to be undervalued in Bogotá and around the world *(Figure 2)*. Figure 1: Mural of a mother and child in Bogotá, Columbia.

Colombian graffiti artist, DJ Lu said when he started out in around 2005, graffiti art was "risky" to do in Colombia (Brodzinsky, 2013). "There were no real rules and anything could happen," (Brodzinsky, 2013). However, after the Becerra murder, Bogotá's municipal government decriminalized graffiti, taking an "if you can't beat them, join them" stance on street art (Brodzinsky, 2013). In February 2013, Bogotá's mayor, Gustavo Petro, issued Decree 75, an ordinance which legalized and regulated graffiti and street art in Bogotá until 2015 (Brodzinsky, 2013; van Meerbeke & Sletto, 2019, p. 366). Ironically, the decriminalization of graffiti has led to an increase of street art in the areas that are prohibited by Mayor Petro's decree (Brodzinsky, 2013). Even so, street artists, like DJ Lu, state that even under decriminalization, graffiti art will not abide by regulation (Brodzinsky, 2013).

Government and Community Action After Becerra's Murder

Although street art was illegal in Bogotá until 2012, graffiti art still appeared

Figure 1: This graffiti mural in Bogotá, Colombia, depicts a powerful image of a woman and her child. There are several murals in the city designed to show appreciation for the unpaid work of women and caregivers

within the Historic District La Candelaria (Wakeland, 2021). In 2012 the municipal government of Bogotá established a regulated zone for graffiti art, which permitted street art in the area northwest of La Candelaria (Wakeland, 2021). Grants were also given to some street art installations, including those within the district of La Candelaria (Wakeland, 2021). In 2013, a mural was created in honour of "victims of violence, anti-union repression, and forced displacement", receiving public praise along with awards from the City of Bogotá and external organizations, such as the Art and Memory Award (Aguilar-Forero 2017; Wakeland, 2021, p. 32). It is important to note that regulations prohibiting street art on "drinking fountains, telephone booths, car windows, shop windows, banks, public transport, zoos, monuments, government buildings, trees, plants, and garbage trucks" remained in place (Wakeland, 2021, p. 32). Consequences of violating this ordinance included being subject to financial penalty (Wakeland, 2021). Consequences of violating this ordinance included being subject to financial penalty (Wakeland, 2021).

From 2015 to 2016, despite previous decriminalization of street art, more municipal restrictions were put in place, prohibiting graffiti on transit infrastructure with specific exceptions like tagging underneath bridges (Wakeland, 2021). Additional regulations also protected public spaces and national government structures (Colombia National Government 2016; Wakeland, 2021). In 2019, these restrictions were challenged in court on the basis that they violated rights to free speech. Ultimately, the courts ruled against the petitioners reenforcing the laws in place (Columbia Constitutional Court, 2019; Wakeland, 2021).

Figure 2: This graffiti mural in Bogotá, Colombia, depicts a powerful image of a woman and her child. There are several murals in the city designed to show appreciation for the unpaid work of women and caregivers.

Impact on Graffiti and its Regulations

Before decriminalization, Bogotá already had "a thriving graffiti scene" (Finn, 2016). However, the Becerra murder was described as "a turning point for street art in the city," by local graffiti artist DJ Lu (Brodzinsky, 2013). Subsequent decriminalization changed everything for street artists in Bogotá. Due to mass public pressure and media coverage of Becerra's murder, Bogotá's municipal government decided to regulate instead of criminalize graffiti, which accounted for a shift in public narratives to consider street art a cultural practice (Finn, 2016). When DJ Lu first started his career as a street artist in the early-2000s, he was at great risk, "dodging police who he knew could harass him, shake him down, arrest him, or worse" (Brodzinsky, 2013). However, today, authorities commission graffiti all over the city *(Figure 3)*. Instead of running and hiding from law enforcement, artists are free to take credit for their work, leading many to include their Instagram handles on their murals *(Figure 4)*.

However, although Bogotá is "a more liberal environment to paint," most graffiti art in Bogotá is done without proper authorization from building and property owners (Finn, 2016). Murals that are created without permission "are still at the risk of fines, bribes, beatings by private security and police harassment," according to graffiti artist Crisp, who moved to Bogotá from Australia in 2009 (Finn, 2016). The history of police corruption and violence against citizens has created ambiguity between legal and illegal graffiti art, allowing illegal tagging to gain popularity in Bogotá. Graffiti remains a cultural practice in Bogotá as it is quick and has less risk of being caught by police (Finn, 2016). This form of social reproduction is essential in preserving the "meaning-making and cultural realms" of the everyday city and its art (Miraftab & Huq, 2024, p. 235). While some believe tagging to be vandalism, others find it to be "an integral part of Bogotá's graffiti scene" (Finn, 2016).

Figure 3: A commissioned mural in Bogotá

Conclusion

To conclude, in this essay I examine how the murder of teen graffiti artist, Diego Felipe Becerra and relevant legislative actions contributed to the decriminalization and regulation of graffiti in Bogotá. I outlined the history of graffiti art in Bogotá and the impact of Diego Felipe Becerra's murder on public support for decriminalization of graffiti. I also describe government action taken after the Becerra murder to regulate graffiti and the impacts of these laws on street artists and the general public. I argue that the Becerra murder sparked a city-wide movement, resulting in the subsequent decriminalization of graffiti and street art regulation. It is representative of a public which values free speech.

Figure 4: Instagram handles included by the artists authorized to complete the mural

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pieces of place

by Eryn McDevitt

THE PEE PEE POO POO MAN
THE ALL & GOLDEN
BACK TO BACK W. SPECIAL EXTRAS
NOV 28 - 8PM @ HOT DOCS
DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
PEEPEEPOOPOOMAN.COM
SHE'S MY SWEET LITTLE BABY
THE SUNDAY STAR
Okay! Blue Jays
Two in a row
Time Issued: 8:34 P
Day 355
Dec 20 2024
Not Valid At: BLOOR/YONGE Station
HAVYYYY CAMPERS!!
SAM SAM
MANY SMALL PEOPLE WHO IN MANY SMALL PLACES DO MANY SMALL THINGS THAT CAN ALTER THE FACE OF THE WORLD
416
RELIEF PITCHER
MOTHMAN SANCTUARY
For more information call:
Ext: 777
ASBESTOS CONTAINING
VIVA VIVA PALESTINA!!
LONG LIVE THE RESISTANCE
- by any means necessary
SAM
SAM
NUIT BLANCHE
OCT 5 7PM-7AM
DOUGIE FORD VS ROB FORD
SAT AUG 6 - 9PM ET/6PM PT
'It was feces:' Toronto man, 23, arrested and charged over three poop attacks in four days
Time Issued: 4:47 P
Day 250
Sep 07 2023
Not Valid At: MUSEUM Station
Some waste years in their unwillingness to waste days.
Lucky to have you
SHAMROCK & ROLL

"Growing up in a small town, an hour or so north of Toronto, I was always drawn to the uniqueness of the people and culture of the city. Artistic expression exists everywhere here- whether in graffiti on a building's side or scribbled messages in a quaint café's bathroom. There's something captivating about the unconventional avenues through which opinions and ideas define Toronto.

This collage embraces unconventionality by combining candid and organic elements to create more eccentric compositions while inviting the viewer to find commonalities in everyday experiences through the imagery. I've included various written elements as well,

not just amusing signage from around Toronto, but also words that hold power- words that have built communities and fueled movements.

This piece is deeply personal, filled with elements of my own memories and interests, composed mainly of images I've taken while living downtown.

This work is my love letter to Toronto, representing what I cherish and what I struggle with. This collage is playful and strange, much like the city itself. It includes comedic elements, pop culture references, and moments of celebration.

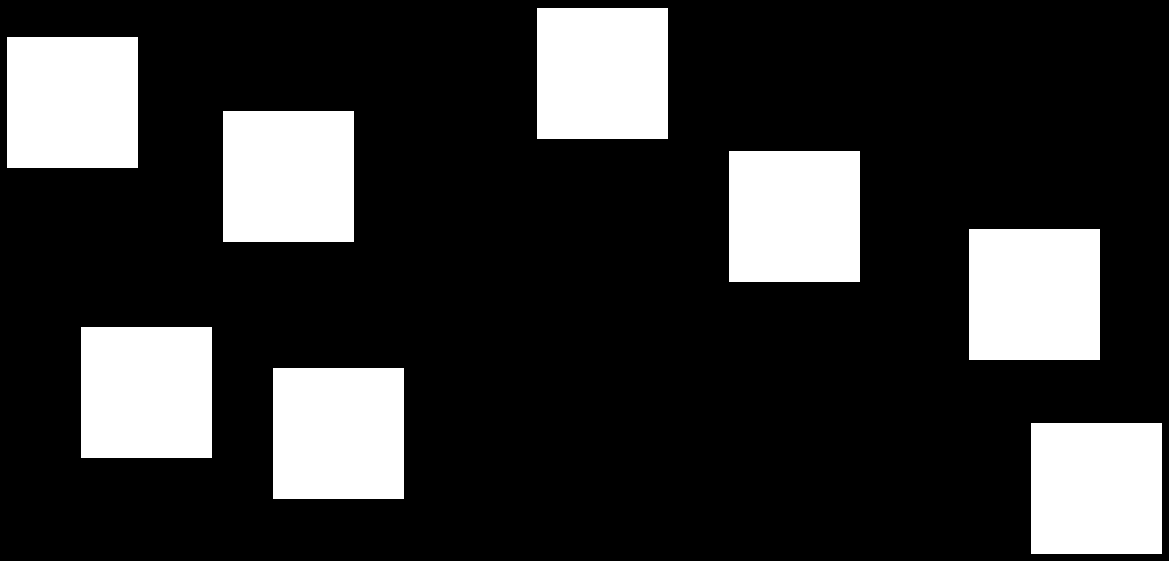
I challenge the viewer to look at this piece as a person in itself, carrying the memories and moments it's held dear to it's heart. In viewing this collage, you experience Toronto as I do. A place of inspiration and activism.

It's not just a city; it's an experience and more importantly, it's a conversation.

The elements in this collage come together to represent the forces that build communities and shape both the individual and shared experiences. I love Toronto for its collective culture, its unspoken understanding, and most of all,

its diversity.

This piece aims not only to communicate my own story, but also my belief that the city of Toronto unites people in unexpected ways."



Housing in the Hands of the Community: Prioritizing Community Land Trusts for Affordable Housing Development

by Luke Joonhwa Lee

This paper argues that the City of Toronto should prioritize and support community land trusts (CLTs) over private developers to build affordable housing that meet the diverse needs of all residents. The federal, provincial, and municipal governments have largely employed a top-down approach to housing policy, where the communities most affected are consulted but deprived of meaningful decision-making authority. CLTs can empower communities to take control of their own housing. These grassroot organizations tackle 'urban contestations' by promoting dialogue, empathy, and collective well-being within communities through participatory decision-making. This paper highlights the shortcomings and inequalities created by the City's current market-driven development model. Drawing insights from Stockholm, Sweden and Victoria, Canada, the paper proposes ways to make CLTs an essential component of the City's affordable housing strategy.

Toronto is in dire need of more affordable housing. Despite the federal, provincial, and municipal governments initiating broad strategies to address this crisis, their efforts have largely employed a top-down approach relying on private developers. Affected communities are consulted but deprived of meaningful decision-making authority. In response, community land trusts (CLTs) have emerged as a grassroots solution, empowering communities to take control of their housing. This paper argues that the City of Toronto should prioritize and support CLTs over private developers to build affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of all residents. To explain, I first identify the shortcomings of current affordable housing initiatives. Then, I explore how CLTs' provision of non-market housing can address these issues. I examine Toronto's current dealings with CLTs and lessons from Stockholm and Victoria. Finally, I offer recommendations for the City to better support Toronto's CLTs.

Shortcomings of Current Affordable

The overreliance on private developers in current housing strategies has resulted in affordable housing that often fails to meet core community needs. At the federal level, programs like the Rental Construction Finance Initiative[1] funnel the majority of financing for affordable housing to private developers (Hemingway et al. 2024). The 2023 Budget announced $15 billion in incentives for private developers, compared to just $1 billion for non-profits (Department of Finance 2023). The provincial and municipal governments exhibit a similar preference for incentivizing private developers rather than non-market housing providers (City of Toronto 2019, 81; Dantzler 2022, 11). Governments incentivize private developers to build economically affordable housing, not to engage with communities and identify their unique housing needs. An affordable one-bedroom studio may not meet the needs of a multi-generational family, just as an affordable walk-up unit may not be adequate for persons with mobility disabilities. Moreover, unchecked private development may result in the displacement of marginalized groups, as documented in American cities by Whittemore (2020, 176). We need to be mindful of who affordable housing is intended for. Without proper community engagement, affordable housing in Canada disproportionately serves politically advantageous constituencies, such as seniors (Leone & Carroll 2010, 400). As Cherise Burda states, the private market "cannot deliver the depth and scale of affordable homes Canada needs" (Affordability Action Council 2023, 2). Hence, to build equitable housing, a new approach is required.

1 The source refers to the program as the *Rental Construction Finance Initiative*. In 2023, the program was renamed the *Apartment Construction Loan Program* but largely maintains the same goals and eligibility requirements.

The Potential of Community Land Trusts

CLTs offer a promising solution. CLTs

are non-profit organizations that acquire and hold land for the benefit of the community, leasing it to individuals for housing. By removing land from the private market, CLTs shield housing costs from market fluctuations and speculation (Meehan 2013, 116). Unlike private housing providers, CLTs focus on long-term affordability by restricting resales on non-market housing and eliminating profit-seeking motives. The increased uptake of such non-market housing benefits the community residents but also stabilizes the broader housing market (CHRC 2024, 12). Moreover, CLTs generally use community-based governance models with an elected board consisting of leaseholders, general community members, and public officials (Bath et al. 2012, 8). Through this participatory governance structure, each CLT develops a community vision. For example, the Kensington Market Community Land Trust aims to provide affordable housing while maintaining the historical and cultural character of the neighbourhood (KMCLT n.d.). This governance model empowers residents to shape their housing access and promotes a greater sense of community belonging (Meehan 2013, 130).

Despite their potential, CLTs face significant challenges, particularly around funding and operational sustainability, which inhibit their capacity to provide affordable housing. A 2023 survey by the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts reveals that among Canada's 41 active CLTs, only 13 hold residential property, of which 75% are affordable units (Trana et al. 2023, 38-39). Although not all CLTs are primarily focused on housing, a majority do seek to provide affordable housing. A lack of consistent government funding remains a critical barrier to expanding their housing portfolios (Trana et al. 2023, 40). Many CLTs rely on grassroots fundraising and private donations, both of which are unsustainable and may compromise their objectives (Bath et al. 2012, 32). Additionally, with board members and staff largely working as volunteers, CLTs face the constant risk of community disengagement (Bath et al. 2012, 27). In the long term, a few volunteer advocates cannot replace paid staff. Municipal collaboration and funding from all three orders of government can help CLTs address these challenges.

Lessons from Stockholm and Victoria

Toronto's current affordable housing programs do not adequately support CLTs nor embrace non-profit-led new development projects. The Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition Program (MURA) is the primary funding avenue for non-profit housing providers, including CLTs. MURA does not finance new development and rather focuses on acquiring and converting existing market units into affordable non-market units (Housing Secretariat 2024). Yet, the demand for affordable housing exceeds what can be acquired through the existing supply, and more must be newly built. Currently, the City is filling this gap mainly through the private market. Yet as residents living in non-market housing highlight, non-profits are uniquely equipped to build new affordable housing that meets the needs of the marginalized residents they serve (Albert et al. 2024). Moreover, within its housing programs, the City groups CLTs with other non-profit housing providers, including the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), a City-controlled housing provider that operates almost 60,000 units (City of Toronto 2019, 69). Unlike the TCHC, CLTs require targeted capacity-building support, such as training for board members (Bath et al. 2012, 22). The needs of hyper-local CLTs are distinct and therefore cannot be treated the same as large organizations such as the TCHC.

Outside of Toronto, the case of Stockholm shows how strong municipal involvement in land policy can promote housing affordability, while Victoria's housing strategy demonstrates how Canadian municipalities can reduce their reliance on private developers. In Stockholm, the municipal government sold long-term leases of municipal land exclusively to public bodies at minimal costs. The municipality privileged local public organizations to increase the housing stock (Lawson & Ruonavaara 2020, 33). Long-term leases and non-market housing development kept housing prices at affordable levels (Lawson & Ruonavaara 2020, 33). Critics, however, argued that the municipal monopoly on land use led to bureaucratic planning that failed to capture citizens' needs (Lawson & Ruonavaara 2020, 35). Closer to home, the City of Victoria, British Columbia, has implemented an affordable housing strategy that explicitly prioritizes funding for non-market projects rather than private developers (City of Victoria 2024). Additionally, while the City does provide tax incentives to private projects, these are contingent on strict conditions, such as ensuring long-term affordability for at least 10% of the units built (City of Victoria 2024). Both jurisdictions' experiences offer pathways Toronto could follow to increase its affordable housing stock.

Policy Recommendations

To effectively support CLTs and address Toronto's affordable housing crisis, the City should prioritize targeted measures that enable these grassroots organizations to play a greater role in building new housing. To start, communities must remain the initiators of CLTs. However, once established, the City should proactively engage with the CLT to address the funding and operational gaps identified by its members. The burden should not be on CLTs to navigate municipal bylaws and financing programs. The municipality can facilitate low-cost acquisitions or long-term leases of public land by CLTs while continuing to implement zoning reforms that remove unnecessary barriers to construction.

Moreover, local councillors and municipal staff should help build CLTs' operational capacities, either through consultancy or by being elected to the CLTs' boards. This capacity-building exercise is necessary to empower CLTs to acquire land and financing, especially near transit services (Whitzman 2024, 13). Collaborating with CLTs avoids the monopolistic style of the Stockholm case, given the non-profits' democratic governance structures. Hessey (2023) also highlights that empowering non-profits should not imply an offloading of responsibility from the municipality. Maintaining close collaboration between municipal personnel with CLTs' membership ensures that this is not the case. The City must continue to play an important role in coordinating resources and lobbying higher orders of government for further support.

Furthermore, the City should enable CLTs to not only acquire existing market units but also to build new units that cater to the specific needs of their community members. Recognizing that the City does not have unlimited funds, funding for CLT-led development should be redirected from its current reliance on private developers. Doing so can reduce rents by approximately 46% and ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity (Whitzman 2024, 11). These recommendations aim to encourage CLTs to build affordable housing for their communities.

Conclusion

Community land trusts will continue to have a growing presence in Toronto's housing market as communities mobilize and seek solutions to the housing crisis. By closely collaborating

with CLTs and providing targeted support, the City can ensure that new affordable housing meets the unique needs of its diverse communities. Beyond housing, CLTs strengthen community ties and enhance the city's urban livability. By acting now, Toronto has an opportunity to partake in a movement that prioritizes community empowerment in housing development, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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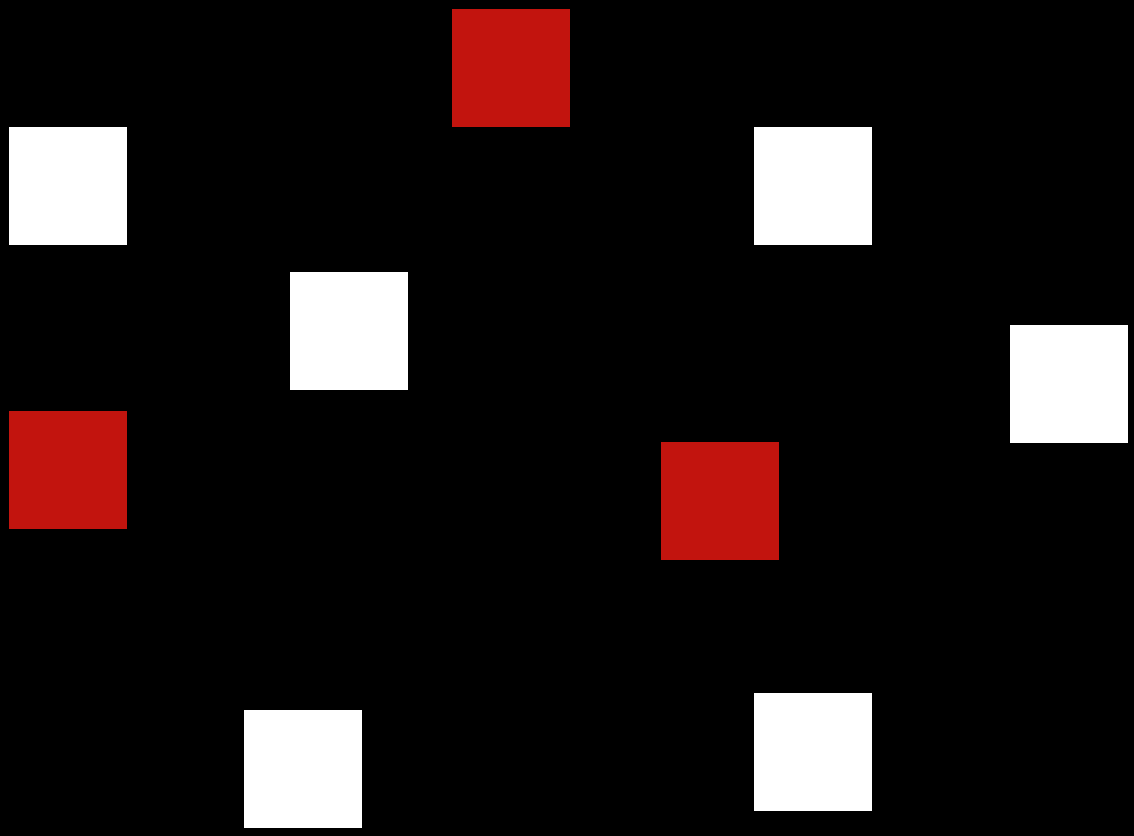
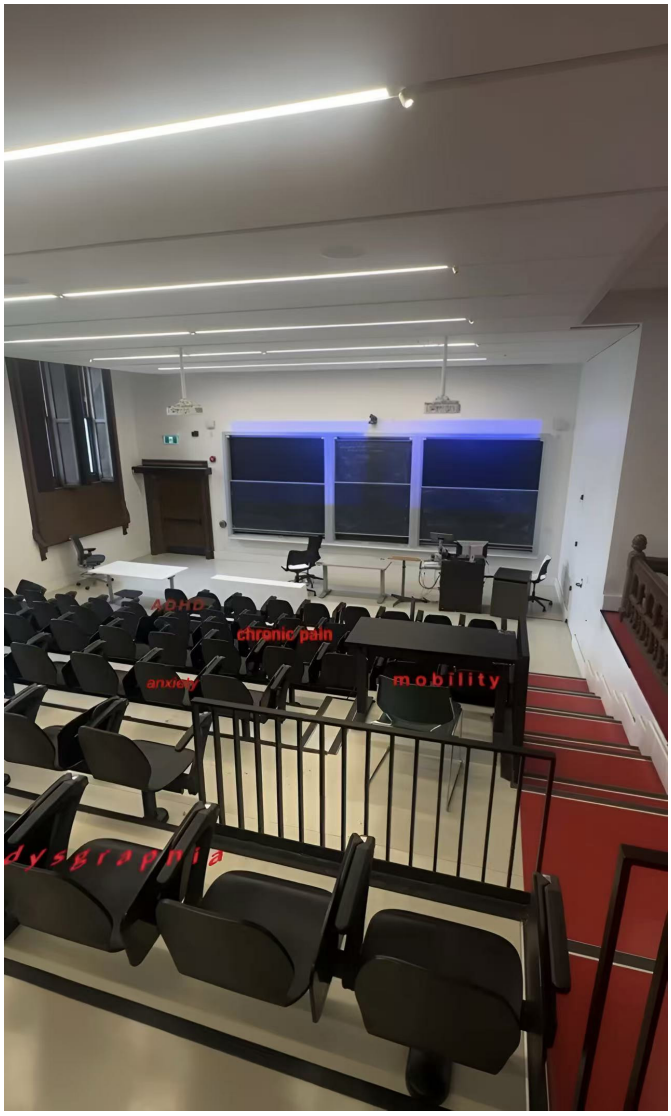


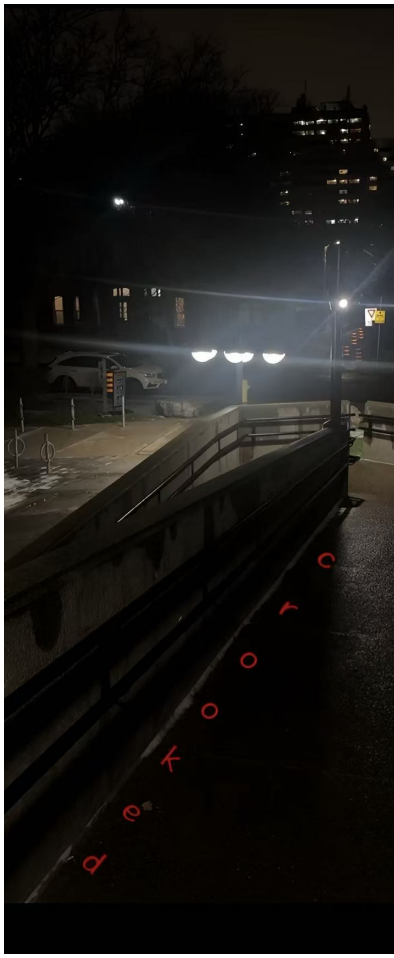
“Claim Disability to Keep Up”: Exploring the Ableist University

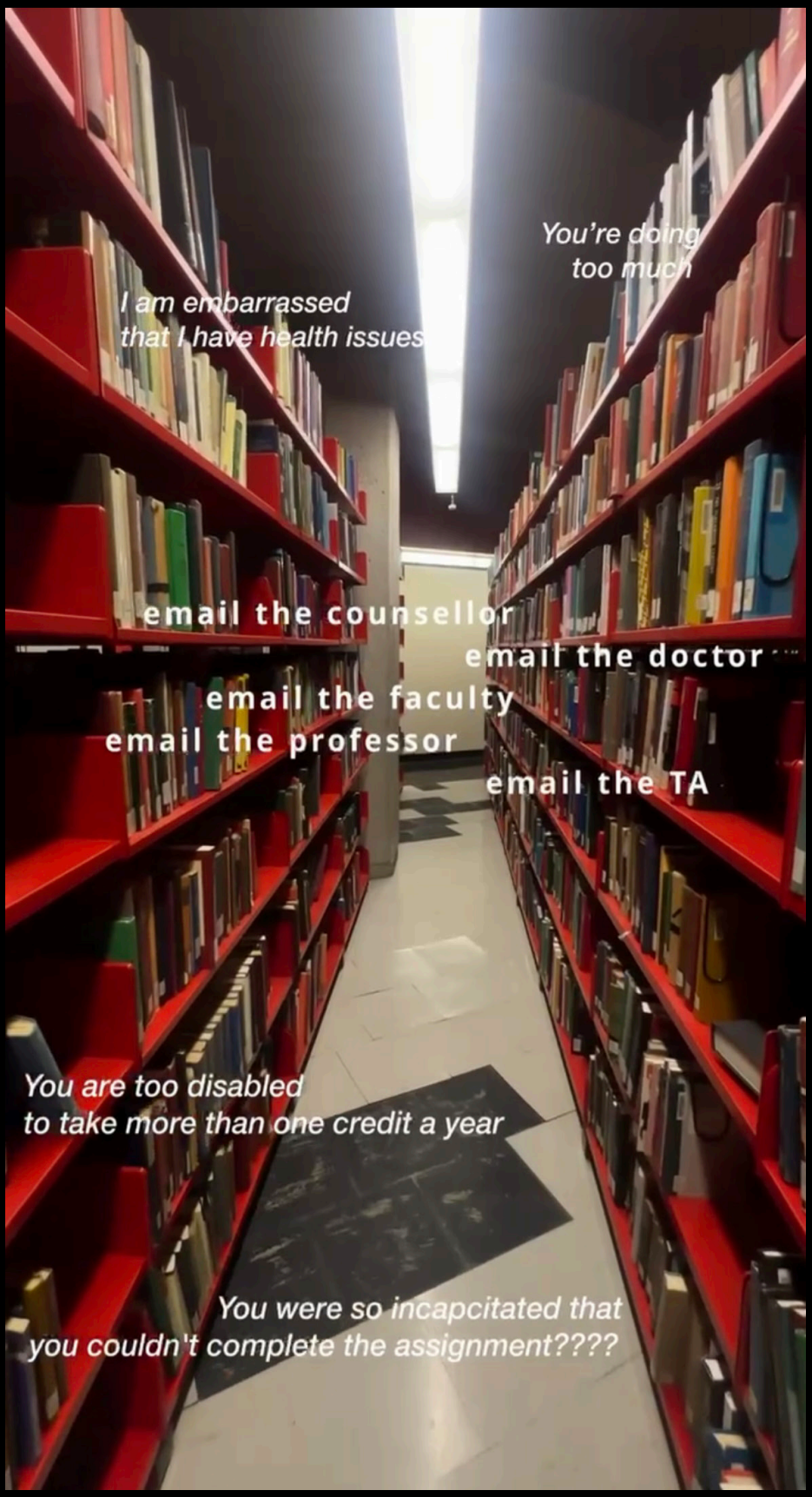
by Polina Gorn



This piece explores topics of academic ableism, passing, and accessibility in academia.

The textual elements of my project are based on sources that reflect students' experiences of academic ableism (Dolmage, 2017; Ellis, 2024; Shanouda, 2019), both in the built environment and in the institutional approaches to accessibility.




You're doing too much
I am embarrassed that I have health issues
email the counsellor
email the doctor
email the faculty
email the professor
email the TA
You are too disabled to take more than one credit a year
You were so incapcitated that you couldn't complete the assignment????

The first scene explores passing — a process of not disclosing one's stigmatized identity. The slowly appearing texts imply that most of the students in the classroom have at least one physical or mental condition. However, the built environment allows them to pass as able, with the isolated accessible table singling out a student with a mobility disability.

The second scene touches on physical accessibility The ramp's monochrome concrete and the word "crooked" taken from The Varsity article on accessibility at UofT represent the inaccessible nature of a presumably accessible built feature.

The third scene visualizes the experience of student access and ableist interactions in academia. A dynamic shot through the Stacks at Robarts Library with tracked texts displays the ableist phrases people received from the UofT faculty, as well as their feelings about the complex accommodation system at UofT. (e.g., "burden", "incapacitated'). I intentionally used a lot of text elements to convey how overwhelming it can be to navigate university as a disabled student.

Please access the full video on *denCITY Journal* through JPS (Journal Production Services, University of Toronto Libraries)

The last phrase in the third scene encapsulates the message of the entire video: "claim disability to keep up", confronting the ableism of the university accessibility system. The phrase conveys how the neoliberal university's accommodation services violate students' privacy, forcing them to disclose their disabled identities and go through the bureaucratic and medicalized process of proving their disability to get access to resources they require to succeed in university.

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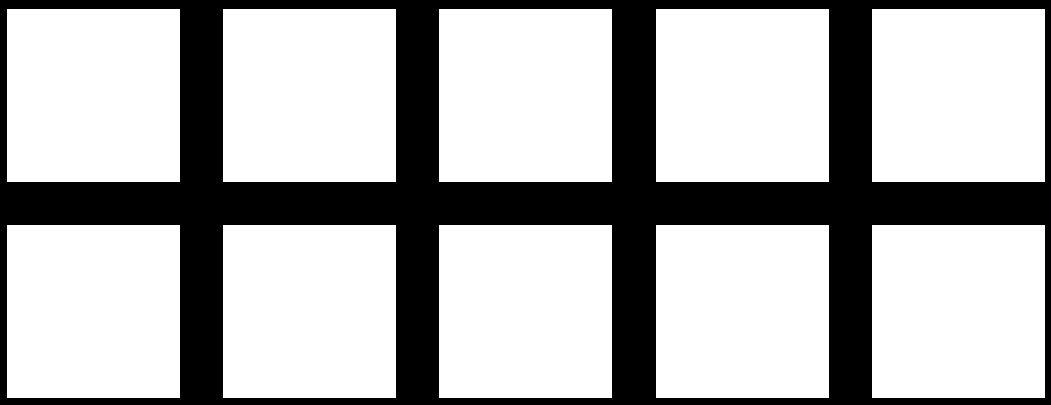

The Exclusivity of Utopia and Cabbagetown: What are we preserving?

by Caitlin Devion

Cabbagetown, a historic neighborhood in Toronto, serves as a compelling case study of how a neighbourhood's identity can undergo spatial, demographic, and social transformation over time. Known for its Victorian mansions, rich social history, and intensive gentrification, Cabbagetown stands in stark contrast to nearby neighbourhoods, notably St. James Town and Regent Park. Not only does Cabbagetown's historic charm make the neighbourhood attractive to prospective homeowners and current residents, but there is a strong neighbourhood community committed to preserving the neighborhood's authenticity, a feature that is absent from most stratified, isolated, and high-density areas. There is palpable anxiety amongst residents that such a beloved place will not be maintained in its full historic form, and these collective efforts are supported by substantial economic and political influences (Duncan & Duncan, 2004).

This paper will investigate urban utopias and argue that efforts to preserve the 'utopian' aspects of neighbourhood authenticity in Cabbagetown will only exacerbate the exclusionary effects of gentrification. Firstly, the paper introduces two opposing definitions of urban utopia, one from Le Corbusier as described by James Scott's, Seeing like a State, and the other from Jane Jacobs. Then, an investigation of Cabbagetown's neighbourhood preservation efforts and their effects. Finally, a consideration of the possible effects of a high-modernist development approach on Cabbagetown, interpolated from the adjacent Regent Park neighbourhood in the same area.

Utopia is a subjective term. John Friedmann describes utopia as a two-pronged idea: a critique and a constructive vision. Striving for utopia requires the critique of the current general condition, invoking efforts towards freedom, equality, solidarity, and ultimately justice (Friedmann, 2000). To that end, the concept of high modernism, as thought by Le Corbusier, could be seen as a manifestation of utopia. High modernism's ultimate goal is perfection on a planetary scale, chasing the maximum efficiency and functionality that a city could achieve. Le Corbusier's ideal city is, "huge, machine-age, hierarchical, [and] centralized." (Scott, 1998). A defining feature of Le Corbusier's planning is neutrality – cities or areas using his planning principles seem to be built without reference to any place-specific urban history (Fainstein & Defilippis, 2016). As a result, the cities are left feeling devoid of local identity, context, and community input, as they are replaced with the application of generic and standardized urban development models defined by the planner (Fainstein & Defilippis, 2016). The implicit belief in the planner's authority left the community to reckon with these changes without adequate consultation (Fainstein & Defilippis, 2016; Fumia, 2010). This ultimately resulted in a revitalization project that attempted to remedy these issues but ironically, it was only able to maintain some key elements of the high modernist planning ethos, such as a hierarchical development approach and visual aesthetic choice.

Jane Jacobs' writings are positioned as the critique of Le Corbusier's constructive vision, demonstrating another form of utopian urbanism. Departing from the geometric order of high modernism, Jacobs focuses on organic, social constructions of space, and the complex interactions that form what she calls the "street ballet" (Jacobs, 1961). Contrasting from high modernism, which sees multifunctional areas as disorderly and confusing, Jacobian utopia seeks informality in the public space, stating that diverse activities within a neighbourhood build vibrant and safe urban environments. As opposed to rigid social order, she instead praises the "unconscious network of voluntary controls and standards among the people, and enforced by the people themselves", commenting on how intersections of public and private space create safer, more lively neighbourhoods. This network fosters the development of social connections and trust between residents, and emphasises the benefit of density and diversity in aiding the creation of lively spaces that people actually want to be in (Jacobs, 1961). An additional benefit to density and diversity of street activity (the street ballet) is the public function of private business. She deems neighbourhood watches as "eyes on the street," claiming that familiarity with those in one's neighbourhood will create incentives to protect and help others, describing instances of business owners participating in neighbourhood connections (Jacobs, 1961). The distinction between informality and authoritarianism between Jacobs and Le Corbusier highlights a difference in their perspectives. Le Corbusier took a top-down approach with formal architectural order, while Jacobs' style originated in a bottom-up approach with informal social

order from the street (Scott, 1991).

These two distinct planning philosophies pop their heads above the parapet of Toronto's development, just adjacent to each other. Cabbagetown is a representative of Jacobian utopia in downtown Toronto, it has a distinctive neighbourhood character as a result of its rich historical stake in Toronto's development. The name 'Cabbagetown' now refers to the neighbourhood found between Gerrard Street in the south, Sherbourne Street in the west and the St. James Cemetery in the north and east. This is a revision from the original boundaries that used to include the areas south of Gerrard Street, one of the city's most prominent working class and immigrant neighbourhoods (Fumia, 2010; Grant, 1968). Home to predominantly Irish immigrants following WWI, the neighbourhood got its name from the cabbages they would grow in the front yards of their Victorian-style houses. Following the devastating impact of the Great Depression, the neighbourhood was characterized by extreme poverty and became the subject of slum clearance (James, 2010). The Regent Park Housing Development, a high-modernist, top-down project aiming to inspire morality in the residents, was built in a cleared area south of Gerrard Street, whittling down Cabbagetown. This moment could explain why Cabbagetown's architecture is so appealing – in close proximity to Regent Park, Jacobian Cabbagetown's personality and distinction as a location can seem incredibly appealing. With its, as Fumia describes, "beautifully restored Victorian homes, inner city farm, green spaces and middle-class respectability," the neighbourhood became a place of distinction, and something to be preserved (Fumia, 2010). This is the point where the Cabbagetown and Regent Park diverged into different urban path dependencies. Cabbagetown went the route of traditional gentrification, as described by Ruth Glass, while the surrounding areas were subject to disinvestment from the government or, in Regent Park's case, displacement and eventual redevelopment (Fumia, 2010; Glass, 1964). Class differences, investment in greenspace, and the expectation of orderly behaviours now defined Cabbagetown through this process (Fumia, 2010).

Economic shifts and aesthetic transformations further contributed to the area's current identity and functionality as a neighbourhood. The Old Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area (OCBIA), an association originally formed to plan a parade in 1981, made a continual effort to draw more lucrative business to the area, which was predominantly occupied by dollar stores and businesses selling inexpensive goods (CabbagetownTO, n.d., Fumia, 2010). These businesses served the lower income residents living in and inhabiting the surrounding areas, but the newer residents had different needs and expectations of the area. Now, a prominent creative community inhabits this area, and has been developing real-estate value since the beginning of this gentrification process, buying entry into the intricate street ballet, interconnected transit, and aestheticism of the area (Jacobs, 1961).

Preservation efforts and the pursuit of urban authenticity take center stage in shaping the Cabbagetown's neighbourhood identity. Residents, supported by economic and political status, passionately advocate for the maintenance of Cabbagetown's historic charm. This is apparent in two ways: efforts from residents to preserve neighbourhood order and the historical classification of aspects of the neighbourhood. In 2009, the OCBIA proposed a pilot project to provide three street corners with seating to enhance the ambiance of the space and attract more business to vacant stores by giving people a space to spend more time (Fumia, 2010). However, a resident's association took a staunch oppositional position to the proposal on the basis that seating space near residential areas could incite

activities considered disorderly or cause too much noise (Cabbagetown Residents Association, n.d). A petition and organized effort from residents attempted to block the proposal in the name of preventing the space from being used for drug dealing, violence, and the public consumption of alcohol (Fumia, 2010). While these concerns are understandable, blocking the creation of public space for residents to enjoy through exclusionary discourse calls to a critique of Jane Jacobs' "eyes on the street" argument of utopia. Policing by residents of a neighbourhood may have positive impacts but can also lead to situations such as these where an 'us and them' dichotomy forms, which excludes residents from a developing neighbourhood identity. This seemingly positive addition to the neighbourhood, where the public and private aspects of the city can interact, is seen as something that lowers the value of the area. Like Bedford, a suburb in New York, Cabbagetown can be seen as a positional good, as residents see an aesthetic and social distinction in living in the neighbourhood as opposed to surrounding areas (Duncan & Duncan, 2004). Maintaining a balance between the interests of gentrifiers and past residents, produces this social, economic, and racial struggle (Fumia, 2010). If Cabbagetown is a good to be commodified and preserved to adhere to middle-class, white sensibilities, who does the historical charm of the area end up serving? Who gets to experience Cabbagetown as a Jacobian utopia and who is excluded?

The second prong of resident preservation is related to Cabbagetown's designation as a Heritage Conservation District in the early 2000s. This distinction acknowledges the significance of its historical and architectural heritage, providing a formal framework for the protection of its features. This could not have come without significant action from residents, creating the perception of historical character in Cabbagetown, such as the formation of Cabbagetown Preservation Association (CPA) in 1987 to protect the area's "architectural integrity and historic character" (Cabbagetown Preservation Association, n.d). In Sharon Zukin's Naked City, she argues that the idea of authenticity in the urban context is not an inherent quality, but rather a socially constructed and contested concept. It is often linked to the perception of a place as genuine, unique, and unaffected by commercialization or mass production. Authenticity, in this sense, is associated with a sense of place identity that reflects the history, character, and distinctiveness of a community (Zukin, 2010). While some of these aspects are reflected in Cabbagetown, it is shaped by the interactions and negotiations among various stakeholders, including residents, business owners, developers, and tourists. The struggle for authenticity, is a response to the challenges posed by urban gentrification, commercialization, and the homogenization of urban spaces (Zukin, 2010). Riverdale Farm, Toronto Necropolis and the St. James Cemetery are examples of spaces that act as tourist attractions and commodify the historical aspect of the neighbourhood, while serving an actual purpose within the neighbourhood (Tripadvisor, n.d.). Riverdale Farm provides vast greenspace and a surrounding functional park to residents while being a pillar of the city. The Necropolis and St James Cemetery both provide guided tours which commodify the deceased in a darkly comedic way (Kerry, 2023). These are aspects of Cabbagetown that contribute to its historical identity and, by extension, its authenticity as a historic site.

Once again, this raises the question: Who does gentrification serve and who gets to experience Cabbagetown as a Jacobian utopia? Once a community, Cabbagetown became a desirable, "utopic" place, where the allure of historic preservation is confronted with the challenge of maintaining affordability and inclusivity. This dynamic illustrates the broader urban struggle to balance progress with the

preservation of authentic identity in the face of evolving societal and economic pressures.

Cabbagetown, with its dual identity as both an urban utopia and dystopia, encapsulates the interplay between historical preservation, socioeconomic dynamics, and the unintended consequences of gentrification. With its Victorian charm and rich social history, Cabbagetown occupies a unique position, distinguishing itself from neighboring St. James Town and Regent Park through a deliberate avoidance of a technocratic development approach. The distinguishing factor in Cabbagetown's narrative lies not just in its physical allure but in the resident effort to safeguard the neighborhood's authenticity. Fueled by significant economic and political influence, these preservation efforts paradoxically intensify the very gentrification they seek to mitigate. The implications of this dynamic are far-reaching, giving rise to spatial exclusion within a once tightly-knit immigrant community. The paradox of preserving a utopic ideal while inadvertently contributing to spatial exclusion prompts a need for a reevaluation of the motivations behind resident preservation efforts. It becomes evident that neighbourhood challenges are not entirely reliant in preserving physical structures but more so in nurturing the social fabric and community bonds that define their essence. Cabbagetown's story, representative of a wide breadth of urban challenges, offers a lesson to be learned in order to aid Toronto in forging a path toward equitable urban development in the pursuit of urban utopia.

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About Our Editorial Team

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Yi En Wang is a fourth-year student with majors in Urban Studies and Sociology, and a minor in Diaspora and Transnational Studies. Her passion for civic engagement and public participation has driven her leadership roles, including serving as Co-President of the Urban Studies Student Union (URSSU) and contributing to the Community and Cultural Spaces Trust (CCST) over the past year.

Yi En joined the denCITY Student Journal in 2023, where she played a pivotal role in digitizing the journal's first three volumes and revitalizing its presence. As the denCITY Journal Student Representative during the 2023-2024 school year, she helped spearhead the journal's revival, and now, as Editor-in-Chief, she is heartened to see the journal make a triumphant return.

Upon graduation, she will pursue post-graduate studies in Public Policy and Management at the University of Glasgow.

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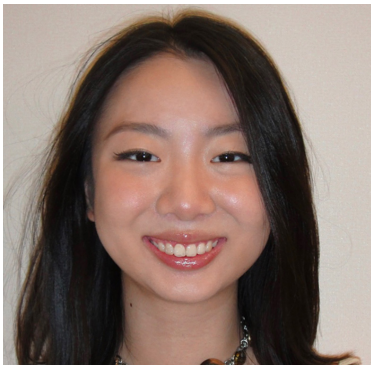

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denCITY is the undergraduate journal of the Urban Studies Students Union (URSSU) at the University of Toronto. It aims to showcase the multidisciplinary nature of urban studies as a field and encourage collaborative discourses between disciplines to address relevant urban issues and phenomena. The works in this volume are contributions of undergraduate students for the 2024-25 issue of the denCITY Student Journal.

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